Maintaining Plants

Prune Plants, Shrubs and Trees

Regularly prune plants, shrubs and trees to promote plant vigor. The best seasons to prune are winter or early spring.

When pruning a tree, leave the entire branch collar (the joint where the branch meets the trunk) intact, allowing new bark to form over the cut.

Prune shrubs every few years to promote an open plant with abundant flowers. Prune flowering shrubs annually to promote more flowers.

Remove up to one third of a plant’s oldest stems at ground level during winter months (renewal pruning). Use caution and do not remove too many stems or the shrub will become leggy.

Remove a plant’s spent blooms (deadhead flowers) to prolong flowering, improve appearance and prevent unwanted fruit or seeds.

Control Weeds, Pests and Disease

Good plant health is the best pest and disease deterrent. Overwatering or wetting plant leaves for long periods can promote disease.

Robust plant growth and mulching will deter weed growth.

Mulch Plant Beds

Use mulches to conserve water and reduce weed growth. Mulches save water by reducing evaporation from the soil surface, increasing water penetration and minimizing soil crusting.

Organic mulches include garden waste, grass clippings and bark. Inorganic mulches include landscape fabric, plastic and rock. Organic mulches are cooler than rock mulches in direct sunlight. Rocks absorb and store heat, reradiating heat to plants.

Visit the Xeriscape Demonstration Gardens and the Weather Station Area to see a variety of plants and mulches. These mulches include rock, bark and shredded tires.

Roll your cursor over the Conservation Gardens illustration on the right side of this page to learn more.

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