

Put clippers to good use pruning shrubs correctly

By Kym Pokorny
Correspondent

CORVALLIS — Every gardener owns a pair of clippers, but not every one knows how to use them for the daunting job of pruning shrubs.

“Pruning is both art and science, and not something most of us get training in,” said Steve Renquist, a horticulturist with Oregon State University’s Extension Service. “Pruning should both enhance a plant’s natural beauty and form, and keep the plant vigorous and productive.”

People unsure of how to approach pruning tend to think of it as a way to cut a shrub down to size, he said. But there is more than one reason to pick up the pruners.

To get started, learn the two types of cuts used on shrubs — heading cuts remove ends of branches to make the plant denser; thinning cuts remove entire branches or canes to give the plant a more open form. It’s also important to know the natural shape or habit for each shrub in your garden.

Mound-forming shrubs, such as abelia and escallonia, need thinning cuts near the ground level. Remove tall shoots that tower above the mound form. Don’t shear mound-forming shrubs or they will become too dense.

Cane-forming shrubs that send up new growth from the base of the plant, including forsythia and lilac, should be allowed to reach their natural height. To keep them looking their best prune once a year using thinning cuts to take out one-eighth to one-fifth of the

canes, preferably the oldest.

Upright or tree-like shrubs like rhododendron usually need little pruning and will look best when thinned slightly every few years.

Save heading cuts for hedges, where tight compact growth is desirable.

Plants with colorful twigs in winter — such as red-twig dogwood and purple osier willow — can be cut back to the ground to encourage brightest color.

Flowering shrubs require a little more thought before pruning if you want them to bloom nicely each year. Most importantly, Renquist said, consider when they bloom. If a shrub flowers in late winter or spring, such as azalea, mock orange and flowering quince, prune after bloom. If they bloom in summer or fall, prune during dormancy in winter.

Don’t just chop the top off of a shrub, he said. Topping destroys the natural beauty and weakens it structurally. Instead, think about a shrub’s mature size before buying and invest in one that will fit the space when mature.

If you get stuck with pruners in hand and no idea what to do, turn to your local OSU Extension Master Gardeners.

LETTERS

Continued from page 2

To the Editor:

I agree completely with the rational approach and opinions of Mr. Givot, in regards to the paved trail project. (“*Start with a dirt trail,*” *The Nugget op-ed, April 1, page 2.*)

Starting small with a possible single-track dirt trail, is a great way to “test the waters” and see if there is actually viable public use. This is not only less expensive (significantly), but smarter and more environmentally conscious.

Mr. Givot’s daughter is a biology and science teacher at Sisters High School. I have taken many classes from Mrs. Givot, and have learned from her to respect and appreciate the environment and our forest ecosystems.

As pointed out, this end-all-be-all “yellow brick road” between Sisters and Black Butte Ranch causes severe wildlife and ecosystem fragmentation, and does not align with my education nor personal beliefs of maintaining and respecting the forest.

Will Werts

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

I read with interest regarding the proposed roundabout at Hwy. 20 and Barclay Rd. in Sisters becoming a step closer to reality after a crew of only eight truck drivers ran through a mock-up of a roundabout at the Deschutes Country Fairgrounds. I wonder, was there any other vehicular traffic involved trying to negotiate entry to the roundabout at the same time? Construction is supposed to start in 2016. Is this a done deal?

After writing a letter to the editor of *The Nugget* in May, 2014, I began taking an unofficial, independent survey of truck drivers

in Sisters and have not heard one favorable comment. A UPS driver could not believe that the stop light that had been installed at Hwy. 20 & Barclay Rd. had been removed. Most comments from the truckers were that it would be a disaster. A Coca-Cola truck driver said, “Put the traffic light back in.”

Just imagine a single, double and/or triple truck, bumper to bumper trying to negotiate a roundabout along with regular traffic, trying to merge in with them. Unless you live in Sisters, you can’t realize the amount of traffic streaming into town on weekends, holidays, rodeo season, the quilt festival and all of the other wonderful events Sisters has to offer.

In my opinion, a simpler and far less costly solution would be to install two traffic lights, one at Hwy. 20 and Barclay Rd. and the other at Hwy. 20 and Locust St. The lights could be synchronized to allow pedestrians, especially school children, bicyclists and cross traffic to safely cross the highway. A roundabout would not “solve” the traffic problems at Hwy. 20 and Locust St. which is a nightmare and accident waiting to happen.

Why not try it? The money saved could be used for more advantageous road repairs.

On Easter Sunday, an article about the roundabout appeared in *The Bulletin*. Now the cost of construction is about \$3.2 million. It’s mind-boggling. How much would it cost to install two traffic lights instead? Peter Murphy says that the traffic lights can cause accidents, mainly of the rear-end variety. How many rear-ends have been documented in Hwy. 97 in Bend and Redmond? How many do you think would occur at two traffic lights in Sisters?

Donna Holland

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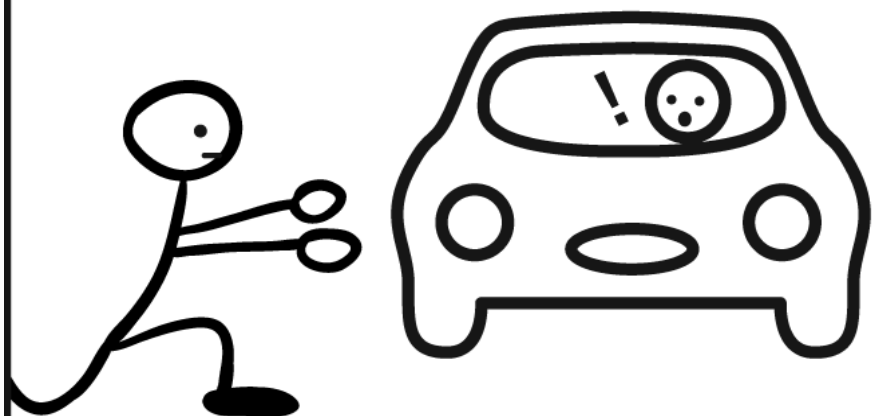
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Common Sense Tip

FOR PEDESTRIANS

CROSS SMART. DON'T DART.



Crossing the street is no time for surprises, so wait for traffic to pass before making your move. And walk on!

Walk Safely. The Way to Go. Transportation Safety — ODOT