

## Can You Dig It?

By Schann Nelson  
Columbia County Master Gardener



Any sunny day is a good excuse to go out and get started pruning, even though many things still have leaves or bunches of dried leaves. Beginning now until spring chores take over, it's time to prune and spray. I'm hoping that by sharing illustrations from my library we can cover

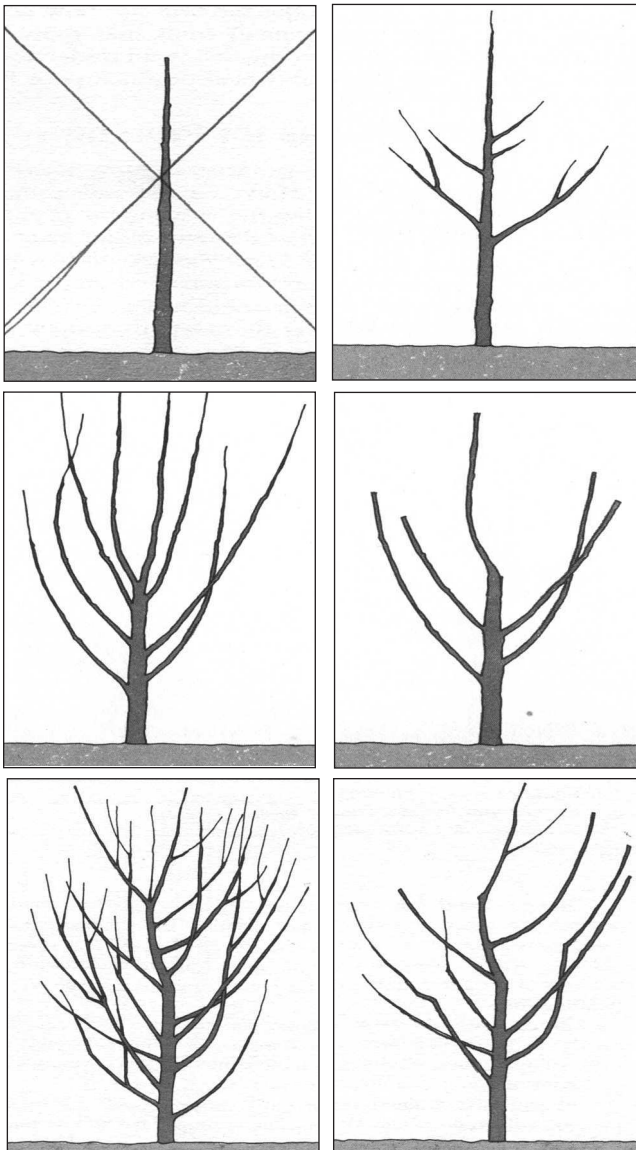
the basics without a lot of words. Pruning is as much art as it is science, I spend at least as much time walking around the tree and studying it, as I do pruning.

This is one time that sharp tools make a huge difference. Disease can be transferred from tree to tree by your pruners so be sure to sterilize with rubbing alcohol periodically. While clean, you can run a sharpening stone over the blade to keep it ship-shape.

We prune to direct the growth of certain trees so that light and air can reach the desired levels of good air circulation and light available to the majority crown growth of the tree. We may also prune to a desired shape for a variety of reasons, including to maximize the use of space or to create some focal point grown into the landscape.

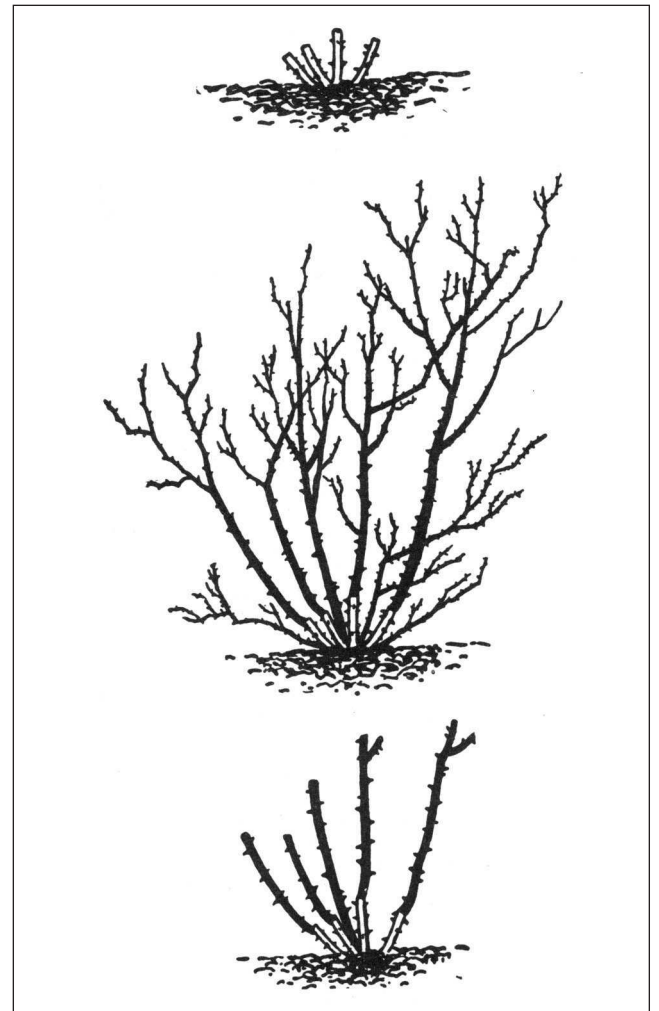
These first six drawings (from author Lewis Hill, 1979) show the transformation of a living stick – such as you might purchase nested in shavings at a store – to a three-year-old tree. I have put a large X on the stick that represents a tree pruned at planting. The recommendation is to prune only twiggy, weak, broken or diseased branches, leaving a firm skeleton. The tree will grow over the summer into something like figure 3. Over the winter, some of the branches are pruned out to give greater air circulation and general shape. Over the following summer, a healthy large tree begins to take shape requiring annual pruning, as

shown in the final figure, to maximize fruit production and reduce diseases.



People are always asking me about roses. I've pretty much given up on them, although my mother

was a master. Deer love roses, but that's another column. Here's a lovely illustration from *Plant Pruning in Pictures* (Montague Free, 1961) called *Around the year with a moderate-growing Hybrid Tea*.



Top, in the spring the newly planted bush was pruned back to stubs. Center, strong growth (black) quickly developed from buds on stubs and flowered in the summer; also one strong shoot and three weaker ones grew from the base of the bush at ground level or below. Bottom. The bush pruned early the next spring.

While the illustration is very clear I have a few issues. First, the strong first year growth that is referred to would require a lot of sun, water and fertilizer, i.e. attention. We all know that this is an area I have trouble with. I don't have much sunshine and sometimes there are issues with the water. Second, the pruning seems a little aggressive. Third, another thing roses want attention to is their mulch – piled up over the crowns in winter and carefully removed in the spring. If you prune in this strict traditional way you will be pruning above the mulch. Better to wait till later in spring, spread the mulch out from the crowns and over the spaces between plants. You want to make sure that you are cutting above the root graft of your rose in most cases, especially for the Hybrid Teas, those spectacular centerpieces of bouquets and bridal flowers.

This is part of why I don't bother. There is also the discussion about variations in pruning for the different types of roses: Tea & Hybrid Tea, Climbing, Dwarf Polyantha, Floribunda, Rambler, Pillar and Species. Add to that the advances in hybridizing for disease resistance, and finding and picking roses is just not my thing. If it's yours or you would like to know more, I hope this provides you with some starting point.

## Church Directory

<p><b>VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH</b> Carl Pense, Pastor 850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia 503 429-1103 Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m. Children's Sunday School</p>	<p><b>FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH</b> Pastor John D. Murray 359 "A" Street, Vernonia 503 860-3860 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m. Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP</b> John Cahill, Pastor 939 Bridge Street, Vernonia 503-429-1161 www.pbfalive.com Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Thursday Prayer 7:00 p.m.</p>
<p><b>SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST</b> Larry Gibson, Pastor 2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia 503 429-8301 Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m. Sabbath School 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH</b> Ralph Young, Pastor 957 State Avenue, Vernonia 503 429-6790 Sunday Bible Classes 9:00 a.m. Family Praise &amp; Worship 10:30 a.m. Wednesday Prayer 6:30 p.m. Thursday Ladies Study 7:00 p.m. Nursery 10:15 a.m. Vernonia Community Preschool</p>	<p><b>NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH</b> Gary Taylor, Pastor Grant &amp; North Streets, Vernonia 503 429-5378 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Nursery available Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.</p>
<p><b>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</b> Wayne and Maureen Marr 662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia, 503 429-0373 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p><b>VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> Sam Hough, Minister 410 North Street, Vernonia 503 429-6522 Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m. (meets in Youth &amp; Family Center) Various Home Group Meetings</p>	<p><b>CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS</b> Marc Farmer, Branch President 1350 E. Knott Street, Vernonia 503 429-7151 Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m. Sunday School &amp; Primary 11:20 a.m. Relief Society, Priesthood and Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.</p>
<p><b>ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator 960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia 503 429-8841 Mass Sunday 12:00 Noon Religious Educ. Sunday 10:30 a.m.</p>		