

November 6, 2015

AGRIVIEW

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Proper pruning enhances the appearance of almost any landscape tree and shrub, while improper pruning can ruin or greatly reduce its landscape potential. Pruning is also an essential task for fruit trees, berries, grapes and muscadines. The key word here is proper, for in most cases, it is better not to prune than to do it incorrectly.

Pruning requires knowing what you are doing to achieve success. The old idea that anyone with a chain saw can be a landscape pruner is far from the truth. More trees are killed or ruined each year from improper pruning than by pests. There are several reasons to prune. Removal of damaged plant parts, reduction of surplus growth, and increasing available energy for the development of flowers, fruits and limbs are three of the most important.

The ideal time to prune most ornamental trees is during the dormant season before new growth begins. As with most rules, there are exceptions. For example, flowering trees that bloom in the spring should be pruned after flowering. When pruning trees, use a thinning method that allows you to maintain the natural appearance of the tree. Avoid “topping” a tree if at all possible. Topping a tree shortens the life of the tree and destroys it’s natural shape.

The best time to prune fruit trees is in January or February just prior to blooming.

Peaches, apricots and nectarines are pruned rather severely each winter to keep the long whips from getting out of hand. Apple and pear trees require only light thinning to remove damaged branches and to open up the tree so that light gets in. Keep in mind that last summers new growth produces this year's flowers and fruit. When growth is shortened and thinned, always leave some of the previous year's growth or the tree will not produce fruit this season.

FUNNY WORMS:

Millipedes and centipedes are minor nuisance pests that tend to move into houses during brief periods in the fall or spring. Millipedes may feed on tender seedlings in greenhouses and gardens. Control is rarely necessary. If required, it primarily should involve moisture control because these arthropods are susceptible to drying.

Millipedes and centipedes generally are found in small numbers in damp locations around the yard. Occasionally, they become unusually abundant or move into homes, where they may cause considerable concern to homeowners.

The most common millipedes are dark brown and reach 1 to 1 ½ inches when full grown. They are round and elongated, with many small legs. When dead or disturbed, they tend to curl into a tight coil.

Millipedes do not bite or pose any danger to humans. They feed on rotting organic matter such as leaves and wood and rarely feed on tender green leaves and roots. They spend almost all their time in moist areas, such as under rocks or logs and in lawn thatch.

Movement into houses often is sudden and sporadic. Most millipede movement takes place in September and October and again in mid spring. Invasions often take place shortly

after a period of wet weather and end as suddenly as they start.

Because millipedes require high moisture, they usually die in a home within a day or two. Chronic problems are associated with damp conditions. Measures taken to dry out moist areas usually are sufficient. The hard body of the millipede, however, remains intact for a considerable time after it is dead.

Because millipedes cause no damage in homes other than minor annoyance, the best way to handle infestations is to wait a few days for the problem to subside, then vacuum the bodies that remain. Remove debris and other favorite habitats from around building foundations to help reduce problems. Seal or caulk openings around the foundation to reduce future millipede problems.

Where problems are more severe, band the foundation exterior with an insecticide to prevent movement into homes. Sprays or dusts containing diazinon, malathion, carbaryl (Sevin), (Baygon), pyrethrin or resmethrin applied around building foundations may provide some control.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- November 19th - Cow-Calf Roundtable - 5:30 p.m. - Senior Citizens Building, Athens - \$15.00/person - 1 C. E. U.
- November 21st - Hunter Education Class - 7:30 a.m. - Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens - 903-676-2277 for more information and to register
- December 18th - Trinity Valley Ag Chemical Seminar - 8:00 a.m. - Mabank Fire Station - \$25.00/person - 6 C. E. U.'s

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