Pruning Calendar for Polk County, NC

Month	Plants	Remarks
JANUARY	<u>Shade Trees</u>: oak, hickory, beech, black gum, poplar, sycamore, ginkgo, etc. • (Bleeder trees include: birch, dogwood, elm, maple, & styrax)	Prune undesired and storm damaged limbs. For "bleeder" trees, heavy pruning should be done during the coldest weather. For light pruning of bleeder trees (See July). Make cuts using the Branch Collar Method of pruning. For more information see Extension Leaflet No. 602.
FEBRUARY	<u>Fruit Trees</u>: apple, pear, plum, cherry, peach & nectarine.	Prune annually for best fruit production. (Request a copy of "Training and Pruning Fruit Trees in NC" publication AG-29).
	<u>Grapes</u>:	Prune annually to improve fruit production and to make the vine training easier.
	<u>Summer Flowering Shrubs</u>: Crape Myrtle, Rose of Sharon (althea), butterfly bush. eleagnus, August flowering hydrangeas (normally with white)	Myrtle, Rose of Sharon (althea),) Prune if shrub-like form is desired or if plants need shaping
	<u>Ornamental Grasses</u>: liriope, pampas grass, mondo grass, etc.	Trim annually. Important to trim off previous year's growth before the spring growth begins.
	<u>Overgrown Broadleaf Shrubs</u>: ligustrum(privet), boxwood, osmanthus, photinia (red tip), holly, cleyera, viburnum, etc.	Prune in late February to desired size. Rejuvenate by pruning out 1/3 of shrub each year. As a general rule try not to cut more than 1/3 of bush in any one year.
	<u>Camellia</u>: japonica and sasanqua	Prune anytime after flowering but not later than July 15th.

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FEBRUARY Continued	<u>Crabapple</u>:	Prune out water sprouts and out-of-shape limbs.
	<u>Mountain Laurel</u>: (Kalmia)	Normally very little pruning needed. If shaping desired, cuts MUST be made prior to bud break in the spring for the best results**
	<u>Conifers & Narrow Leaf Evergreens</u>: hemlock. jumper, arborvitae. leyland cypress, etc.	Often late summer growth from the previous season can misshapen these plants. Trim away the excess growth to improve the shrub's appearance.
MARCH	<u>Rose</u>:	Prune annually for best flower production. Trim early in the month before new spring growth begins.
	<u>Nandina</u>:	Prune as needed. Cut the leggy and oldest canes near the ground. New shoots will develop at the location of your pruning cuts.
	<u>Abelia</u>:	Shape plants to desired form early in March.
	<u>Spring Flowering Shrubs</u>: spirea, forsythia (yellow bells), flowering quince, breath-of-spring (winter honeysuckle), weigelia, lilac, etc.	Prune IMMEDIATELY after flowering, but not after July 15th. In general, cut oldest limbs near the ground level for constant rejuvenation of shrubs.
APRIL	<u>Azalea</u>:	Light pruning(12 inches or less) after flowering bur before July 15th (Early spring and autumn pruning removes next year's blossoms). However, overgrown azaleas should be pruned in February**.
	<u>Winter Damaged Plants</u>:	Cut any cold-damaged branches at the end of the month.
	<u>Berry Producing Shrubs</u>: holly, pyracantha, etc.	Prune while in flower to prevent removal of all berries. Shape to desired form.
	<u>Spring Flowering Trees</u>: flowering cherry, Bradford pear, serviceberry, etc.	Prune only as needed, immediately after blooming.

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MAY	Rhododendron:	Prune after flowering, but not after July 15th. Always prune to a whorl of leaves or to the next branch. Severe or renovative pruning should be done in February**.
	Hedges: privet, abelia, holly, euonymus, boxwood, etc.	Prune as desired, always make top of hedge narrower than bottom.
JUNE	Conifers & Narrow-leaf Evergreens:	Summer pruning of conifers is to shape the plants to their desired size. Stan pruning in late June and continue into mid-July. Trim only into new growth: brown wood will not regenerate new growth. White Pines can ONLY be trimmed in summer.
	Gardenia:	Prune immediately after bloom, not after August 10th.
	Perennials: phlox, Shasta daisy, purple coneflower, rudbeckia, etc.	Remove old flowers to encourage re-bloom.
	Chrysanthemums:	Pinch out growth tips to make bushier plants, discontinue pinching around July 15th
	Hydrangea: Big Leaf or Florist	Prune while flowering or immediately after. (These hydrangeas usually have either pink or blue flowers).
	Fruit Trees:	Remove water sprouts
JULY - AUGUST	"Bleeder" Trees: maple, birch, elm, styrax & dogwood	Perform light pruning as desired. (Light pruning involves branches of 12 inches in length or less.) Dogwoods look best left in their natural form. Prune only when grown out of their natural shape.
	Rose:	Prune leggy plants only and fertilize after pruning for fall flowering.

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JULY-AUG Cont.	Hedges:	As needed, keep bottom branches wider than the top.
	Brambles: blackberry & raspberry	Prune out the wood that bore fruit, cutting canes near ground level.
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER	Any Plants:	DO NOT PRUNE shrubs or trees in late summer or early autumn. Pruning stimulates new growth which may not have time to harden off before frost You may remove any deadwood from shrubs or trees.
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER	Weed Trees and Brush:	Remove any underbrush now when it is easiest to see.
	Berry Producing Plants: holly, nandina, pyracantha, etc.	Use berries indoors or in wreaths as Christmas decorations.

Take a rest until January!!

* SPECIAL NOTE: Some trees should be allowed to let their lowest limbs grow until they sweep the ground. Those trees that are commonly found in our region are: Southern Magnolia, Deodora Cedar, American Holly, Hemlock, and White Pine.

** NOTE: Some pruning in late winter & early spring may result in removing this season's flower buds. However, the results of the pruning are much better when trimmed before bud break.

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