Why Prune?

1) **To improve the appearance or health of a plant**. Prompt removal of diseased, damaged, or dead plant parts speeds the formation of callus tissue, and sometimes limits the spread of insects and disease. For trees, pruning a dense canopy permits better air circulation and sunlight penetration. To avoid future problems, remove crossing branches that rub or interfere with each other, and those that form narrow crotches.

2) **To control the size of a plant**. Pruning reduces the size of a plant so that it remains in better proportion with your landscape. Pruning can also decrease shade, prevent interference with utility lines, and allow better access for pest control.

3) **To prevent personal injury or property damage**. Remove dead or hazardously low limbs to make underlying areas safer. Corrective pruning also reduces wind resistance in trees. Prune shrubs with thorny branches back from walkways and other well-traveled areas. Have trained or certified arborists handle any pruning work in the crowns of large trees.

4) **To train young plants**. Train main scaffold branches (those that form the structure of the canopy) to produce stronger and more vigorous trees. You'll find it easier to shape branches with hand pruners when a plant is young than to prune larger branches later. Pruning often begins with young plants for bonsai, topiary, espalier, or other types of special plant training.

5) **To influence fruiting and flowering**. Proper pruning of flower buds encourages early vegetative growth. You can also use selective pruning to stimulate flowering in some species, and to help produce larger (though fewer) fruits in others.

6) **To rejuvenate old trees and shrubs**. As trees and shrubs mature, their forms may become unattractive. Pruning can restore vigor, and enhance the appearance of these plants.