

Renovation Pruning

Excerpts from the Arizona Landscape Contractors Association (February 2018)

Since we are deep in the Arizona winter, many landscape companies have already begun hard cutbacks, also known as Renovation Pruning. This type of pruning is usually performed in the winter and early spring to rejuvenate shrubs and groundcovers to encourage growth after the dormant period. It can also help manage plants that have outgrown the space, are encroaching over sidewalks, or are obstructing lines of sight. Here are a few additional benefits to help better understand why renovation pruning is taking place in your neighborhood:

- Promotes healthy plants by eliminating frequent pruning schedules. Frequently pruned shrubs are in a continuous state of stress, requiring more water to recover.
- Allows for natural seasonal flowering.
- Plants that are not sheared resist stress better than plants routinely and excessively pruned.
- Increases aesthetic value of the landscape.

It is not necessary for plants to be Renovation Pruned every year. Most plants may be cutback every 1-3 years, depending on growth rate and desired size. The pruning is scheduled based on plant characteristics, growth pattern, blooming schedule, and time of year.

One goal that Renovation Pruning accomplishes is to enable light to reach the interior of the plant and promote healthy growth of new foliage. Over many seasons, shearing shrubs can create a thin, weak foliage shell with little to no undergrowth. When there is no light inside a plant's canopy, there will be no photosynthesis, which means no leaves, making the plant appear woody. Excessive pruning is detrimental to a plant's health and eventually leads to irreversible decline.

There are a number of reasons why we prune plants; however the ultimate goal is to encourage natural growth, form and flowering of plant materials in our landscape. Promoting healthy plant growth and maintenance in our landscape is one of the first steps to help preserve our precious natural resources as well as protect our landscape investment.