

Care and Maintenance of Trees and Shrubs at La Quinta in Barkley Ranch Estates

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Acknowledging...

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La Quinta at Barkley Ranch Estates

2013 Landscape Recommendations

The overall intent of La Quinta landscaping is to create visually attractive, healthy, safe, and water efficient plantings in the subdivision. By establishing an understanding of each plant's potential, protocols can be developed for the maintenance and care of them. The purpose of this booklet is to supplement this goal, and assist in the selection of desert adapted plants within La Quinta. Relevant information about size, growth rate, flower color, cold hardiness, exposure preferences are provided, as well as maintenance and water requirements for each plant and/or category. The listing of these proposed plant selection alternatives are to be considered when plants and trees within La Quinta are replaced.

Guidelines are also listed that describe the best practices for managing La Quinta trees and shrubs. Key pruning basics and tips that involve the restoration of older shrubbery are provided with the commitment of maintaining the landscape as functional, safe and with great visual appeal.

Prepared by the La Quinta Landscape Committee:

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Maintenance of Trees and Shrubs in La Quinta

What is Pruning?

Pruning is the intentional removal of parts of a plant. Pruning needs of shrubs commonly planted in the low and mid-elevation deserts in Arizona vary from no pruning to regular seasonal pruning. Requirements vary by plant species, design intent, and placement in a landscape. Fast growing shrubs generally need frequent pruning from the time of establishment until maturity, while slow growing shrubs require little to none. Pruning should only be done when necessary and at the right time of year. Using the natural growth form of a shrub is a good guide for pruning. Shearing shrubs should be avoided except for maintenance of formal hedges or plant sculptures. All pruning should be done with sharp hand pruners or, for thicker stems, loppers.

Why prune?

Reasons for pruning shrubs include maintenance of plant health, controlling plant size (for preventing obstruction of a view, sidewalk, or driveway), and rejuvenating old plants. Maintaining plant health includes the removal of diseased, dying, injured and dead branches. Stems that rub against each other should be removed. Control of shrub size for visibility and safety concerns is sometimes necessary. These can be minimized by allowing sufficient space for the plant to reach its mature size in the landscape. Renovating or rejuvenating old or overgrown

shrubs through pruning generally improves the structure and quality of the plant, and results in improved displays for flowering shrubs. Some shrubs are grown as formal hedges and require continuous pruning to maintain their size and shape.

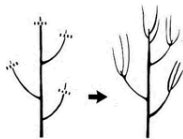
Pruning Shrubs

Selective thinning of trees and shrubs refers to removing branches back to the point of attachment to another branch, or to the ground. This type of pruning opens the plant canopy, increasing light and air



movement. Thinning cuts do not stimulate excessive new growth. They serve to maintain the natural growth habit of the shrub. When light penetrates the canopy, entire branches can maintain leaves whereas in a dense canopy branches have leaves near the tip but are bare further back. Selective thinning is suitable for all plants and is generally the most desirable type of pruning cut.

Heading of trees and shrubs to remove parts of a stem or branch results in multiple new shoots just below the cut. This can create a bushy plant and is



sometimes done when plants are very young to stimulate more branches. However, repeated heading is similar to shearing and eventually results

in a dense canopy with branches having leaves at the tip and no leaves further back. Heading cuts should only be used for formal hedges, for rejuvenation, or when a cluster of branches is desired. Stubs left by heading cuts will usually die back, unless cut just above a bud.

Renovation of older or overly large shrubs extends their life and improves their aesthetic value. One method is to cut all stems about 12-18 inches above the ground. This is a severe measure and changes the appearance drastically. However, when done in spring before bud burst, a great proliferation of stems will grow just below each cut by mid-summer. At that time, about half of the stems should be removed and the remaining ones should be cut back to different heights. Varying the height and cutting just above an outward pointing bud will stimulate growth of new



branches out of the canopy. This procedure works well for larger fast growing shrubs like Texas Ranger, and oleander and for slower growing shrubs like hop bush and creosote.

A less severe approach to rejuvenating shrubs is to remove half or more of the older unproductive branches at the base of the plant or those growing into the canopy. This thins out the plant to a much greater extent than regular maintenance pruning. Follow-

up care requires removing a portion of the new shoots a couple of weeks later, which might be too numerous and result in an overly dense canopy. The third method of rejuvenation spans three to four years and is less noticeable. About one third to a quarter of the oldest unproductive branches are removed each year. This method requires thinning excess branches and cutting back the remaining new branches as described before.

Shearing shrubs entails cutting back branches to a uniform surface. Shearing shrubs cuts the branches to stubs which results in a proliferation of new dense growth just behind the cut. There are several reasons why shearing is not recommended other than for



formal hedges. Shearing is labor intensive and requires repeat shearing to maintain the shape. It destroys the natural growth habit and gives shrubs an unnatural look. It is difficult to control the plant height since the new dense growth shades the inside of the canopy which can defoliate for lack of light. Subsequent cuts into the new growth will shear close to the surface, but over time the dimensions of the canopy will increase. Cutting into the older, bare wood by shearing results in a leafless shrub, limits the plants ability to produce their own food, and depletes their reserves to grow new leaves. This stresses the plant and can

result in decline or death and removes flower buds, flowers, and reduces their beauty.

Pruning Trees

Proper tree care is a mystery to some. However, proper tree care is important because trees are an investment in the value of our homes and the livability of La Quinta. Pruning trees is not recommended until after the tree has overcome transplant stress and has a self-supporting root system. Although pruning removes the energy source for trees (leaves), it is important to do it for three basic reasons: safety, tree health, and appearance. Safety is the most important reason, and pruning to remove existing hazards like dead, diseased, or dying branches and to prevent future ones like narrow branch angles or rubbing branches. The recommended cycle for residential homes and street trees is once every 4 to 6 years.

Most Common Pruning Types:

Crown Thinning — Selectively removing small and weak branches on young trees throughout the crown. This promotes better form and health by increasing light penetration and air movement.



Crown Reduction — Removing larger branches at the top of the tree to reduce its height. When done properly, crown reduction pruning is different from topping because branches are removed immediately above

lateral branches, leaving no stubs. Crown reduction is the least desirable pruning practice. It should be done only when absolutely necessary.

Topping — The practice of indiscriminately removing a majority of a tree's branches. Topping violates most commonly accepted methods of proper pruning. Topping can create a more dangerous tree since branches that "sprout" after topping are weakly attached and as a result, they are more likely to break in a windstorm. By contrast, the positive effects of proper pruning will make trees healthier and extend their life.

The Ten Pruning Commandments

1. Always have a reason to prune — if in doubt, don't take cut it out.
2. All pruning is done at a bud or branch regardless of whether you are shortening a branch or reducing height.
3. Prune to improve strength and safety. Reduce trunk and limb breakage by eliminating multiple trunks of equal size and narrow branch junctures that look like "V's".
4. Prune to improve health by removing the dead, diseased, and dying branches and any branch where light or wind cannot penetrate.
5. Always maintain the upper two thirds of a tree in branches and foliage.
6. Never remove more than 25% of the canopy during one pruning cycle.
7. Never top a tree!
8. Never leave a stub or remove the branch collar by a flush cut.
9. Tree paint tree on wounds is not necessary for any other tree species except oaks.
10. Always disinfect pruning tools between trees to prevent the spread of disease.

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Shrub: *Plumbago auriculata*

Blue Plumbago, Cape Plumbago

Family	Plumbaginaceae
Native Region	Southern Africa
Plant Type	Medium sized, evergreen shrub
Average Height	5' – 6'
Average Spread/Width	6' – 8'
Exposure	Full to Partial Sun

Leaf

- Evergreen, oval, 1 to 2 inches long
- Leaves are medium in size and oblong
- Leaves taper to a short petiole, with semi-angular stems and have a medium texture



Flower

- Light to sky blue, 1 inch flowers that resemble phlox
- Blooming begins in March and continues throughout the summer into November
- Flowers born on terminal clusters



Flower Color Powder blue, tubular flowers

Fruit Insignificant

Cold Hardy 25° F

Additional Notes:

- Fast growth rate; very little litter, good plant backdrop
- A dense plant, provides some shade
- Very drought tolerant
- Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies
- Prune back to the ground in late winter or early spring to control growth
- May be damaged by frost, but will grow back after pruning out damaged branches
- Works well against East facing walls, and



Shrub: *Caesalpinia gilliesii*

Yellow Bird of Paradise

Family	Fabaceae (Legume)
Native Region	Tropics of Argentina and Uruguay
Plant Type	Large irregular shrub
Average Height	5' – 10'
Average Spread/Width	4' – 6', equal to height
Exposure	Full Sun

Leaf

- **Bipinnate** bearing 5 to 10 pairs of pinnae
- 3 – 5 inches long, ferny appearance
- Deciduous, plant loses leaves during winter months



Flower

- Blooms mainly in spring and early summer, then sporadically
- 4 – 5 inch, showy flower clusters



Flower Color Yellow petals, long red stamens

Fruit Tan, fuzzy 4 – 5 inch pods (poisonous)

Cold Hardy 10° F

Additional Notes:

- Deciduous, but may be evergreen in south facing areas
- Rapid growth rate
- Flowers on terminal branches
- Deep and infrequent irrigations
- Prune heavily during winter







THE BLUFFS



La Quinta







THE BLUFFS

La Quinta

THE BLUFFS



La Quinta



What is pruning??

Pruning is the removal of a plant part for:

- **Aesthetics**
- **Plant Health**
- **Rejuvenation**
- **Safety**

PRUNE WITH A PURPOSE

- **Train the plant**
- **To improve the quality of flowers, foliage or stems**
- **Obtain balance between old growth new growth, and flowering**
- **To correct or improve shape**

Shrubs

La Quinta



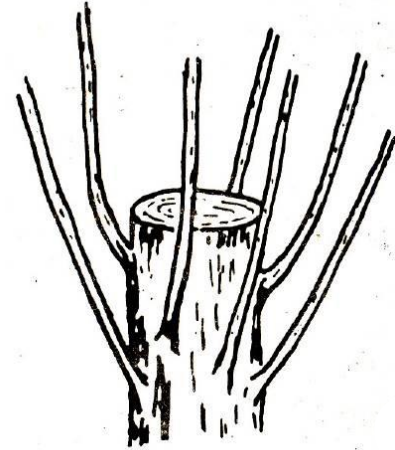
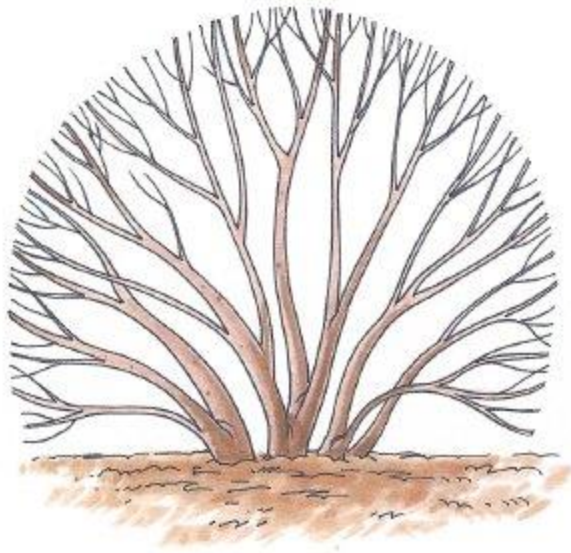




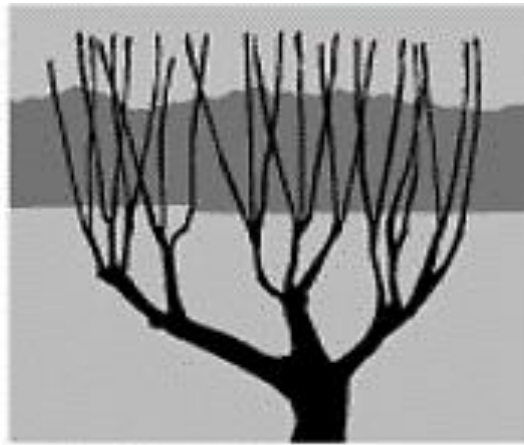
Understanding Plant Biology

- Removing more than 25% of the live crown causes stress to the tree or shrub
- The biological response is to produce more leaves
- Repeated shearing results in branches having leaves only at the tip
- Energy required to seal over pruning wounds can be at the expense of a plant's ability to overcome stress

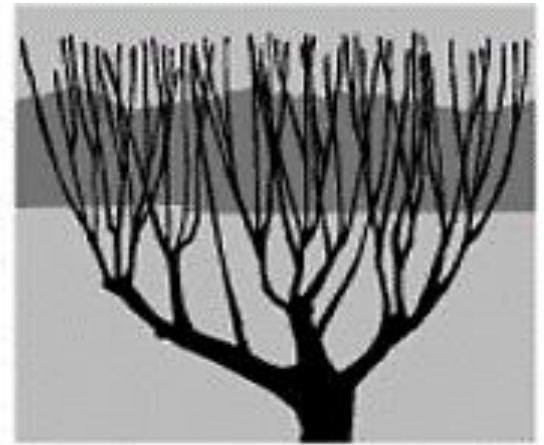




Topped deciduous tree



One year later



Three years later





**Shearing is not
pruning**

Cassia



White Texas Sage







Cassia

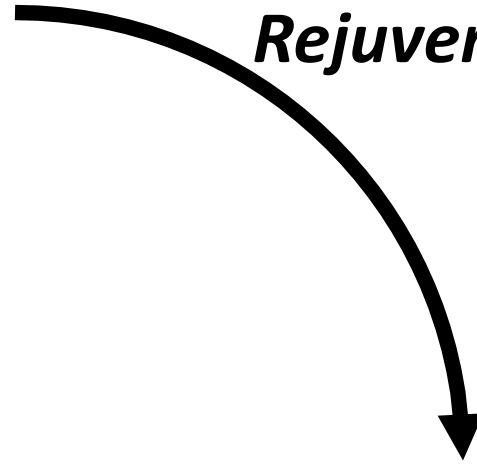


Texas Sage



Texas Sage

Committee Recommendation:
Rejuvenation



Rejuvenating = Plant Renewal

Restoring Overgrown Shrubs

Gradual



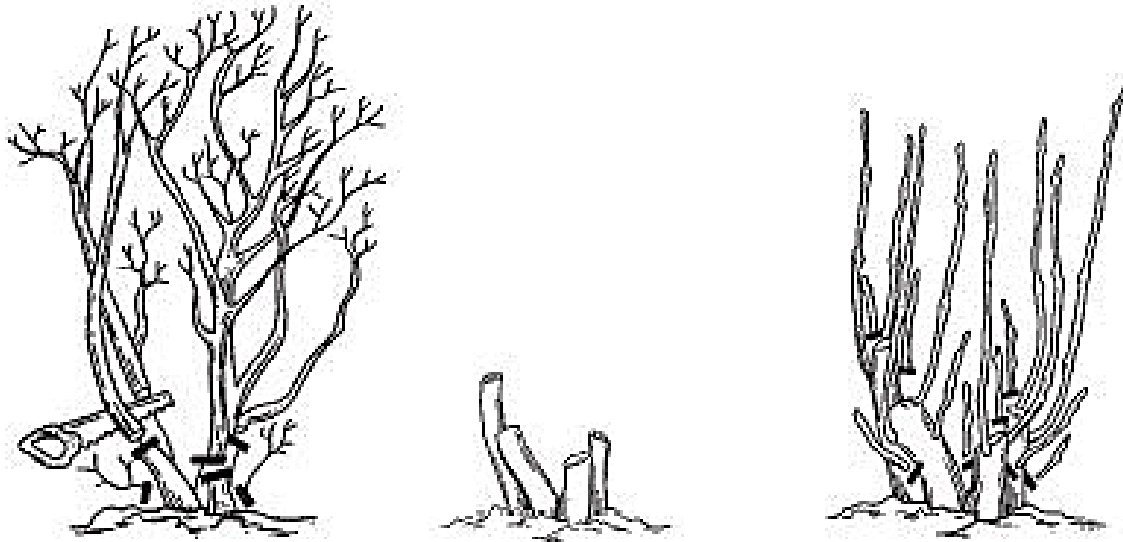
Unpruned Shrub



**Gradual
Rejuvenation**

- **Thin branch number**
- **Branches cut back to plant base**
- **New growth near the base or interior of the plant**
- **Reduce excessive top growth**
- **~30% of LQ shrubs to receive gradual rejuvenation**

Full Rejuvenation Pruning

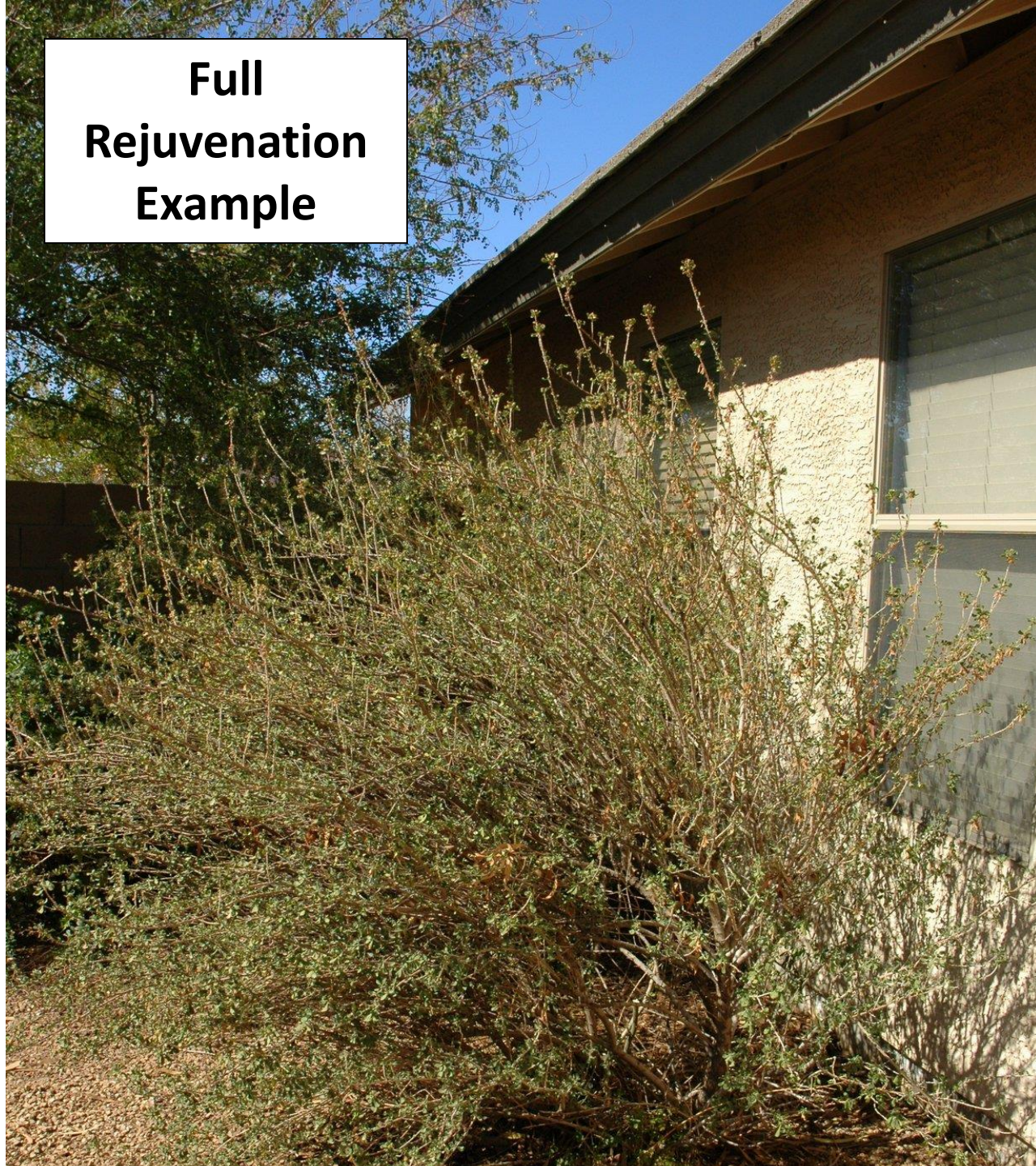


- **Cut all branches 6" - 12" above ground**
- **~30% of LQ shrubs to receive full rejuvenation**

PRUNING TOOLS



**Full
Rejuvenation
Example**







Pruned Back to ~10" in Height



1 month later



Texas Ranger
Leucophyllum candidum



Texas Ranger
Leucophyllum candidum



Texas Ranger
Leucophyllum candidum



Texas Ranger
Leucophyllum candidum



Texas Ranger
Leucophyllum candidum



Texas Ranger
Leucophyllum candidum



Ruella, Mexican Petunia
Ruella brittoniana





Ruella, Mexican Petunia
Ruella brittoniana





Lantana
Lantana camara

Lantana

Lantana camara





Lantana
Lantana camara





Not Renovated

Renovated

Lantana
Lantana camara

HOW TO PRUNE

1. Remove all dead, broken, diseased or crossing branches.
2. Branches should be removed at their point of origin – a lateral branch, the main trunk or at ground level. These pruning cuts should be flush.

Do not leave stubs!





Terminal and Axillary Buds



Terminal and Axillary Buds

winter bud without flowers

flower bud

©2004, Gary Fewless



NO!



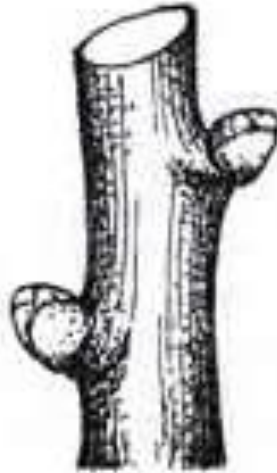
Please do NOT leave stubs!

HOW TO PRUNE

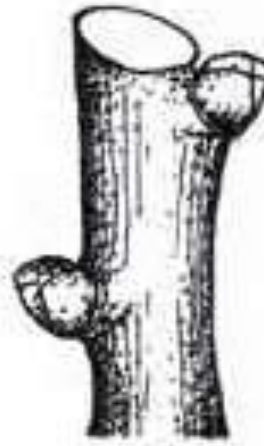
3. When removing small twigs or stems make pruning cuts approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above and angled away from a live bud.



Too close



Too far
away

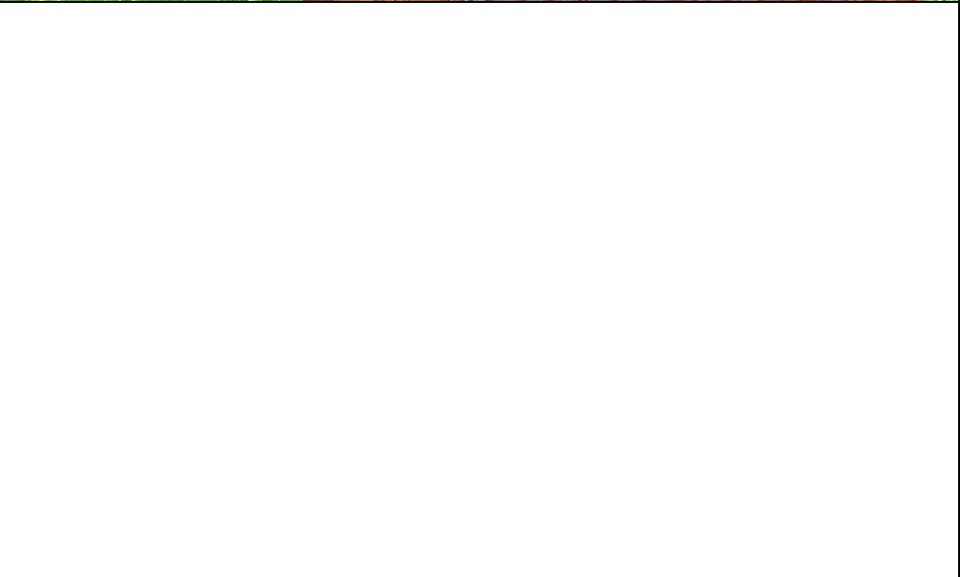
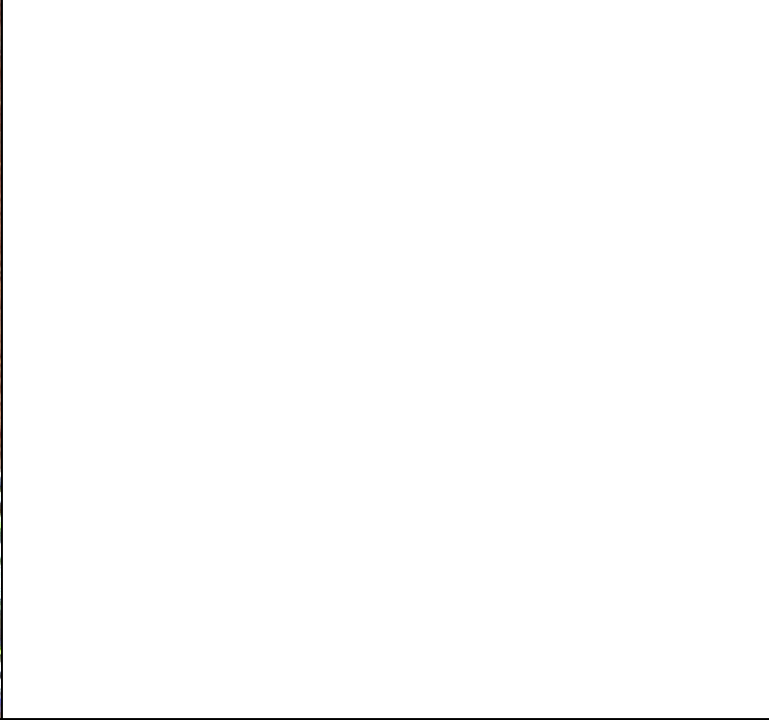


Too flat



Correct









**Shearing Yucca
Plants is NOT
advised!**



**Watch for girdling
young trees with
string trimmers!**