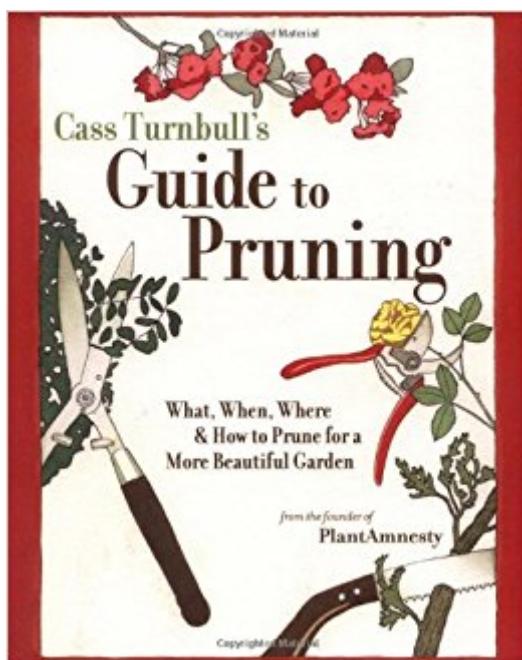


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# Cass Turnbull's Guide To Pruning: What, When, Where, And How To Prune For A More Beautiful Garden



## **Synopsis**

The Northwest Pruning Guide provides step-by-step instructions for pruning trees, shrubs, and other plants to help them flourish in any garden or lawn. It profiles the most common types of plants found in Northwest gardens, including evergreen and deciduous shrubs, bamboos and tea roses, camellia, hedge plants, wisteria, and trees. Each entry also covers common gardening mistakes, traditional methods, proper positions, tips on the best times to prune, and more.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a wonderful book for anyone who needs to understand how to prune. It starts off with giving you a foundation for understanding pruning. Why is it important? What is its purpose? How do plants decide where to put out new growth? What are the different types of cuts? When should you prune? They aren't long sections, but they are thorough enough to give you a solid introduction. After that, she turns to the individual plant families and describes in detail the specifics for each. She also uses a bit of humor here and there to keep the book interesting. It's not dry reading, which is quite the accomplishment. I've found it immensely helpful already and I've only had it a couple of weeks. This is staying on my shelf for years to come.

Cass Turnbull is to pruning and informed gardening today what Thalassa Cruso was to the 1970s and 80s - a botanical Julia Child whose depth of knowledge is matched only by her common sense and wit. In this inexpensive, indispensable book subtitled "What, When, Where & How to Prune for a

More Beautiful Garden" Turnbull takes the no nonsense approach to both the inexperienced and highly skilled gardener, and with her straight forward writing explains in easy to understand terms how to make plants, bushes and trees look and feel their best. One could quibble with the paucity of illustrations, but that may just be part of Turnbulls' technique: if you are serious about learning this art of pruning, then invest the time in the reading. She has a profound respect for plants (she is the founder of PlantAmnesty based in Seattle) and encourages the fearful first-cutter to look, feel and tend to plants and their shaping needs like a caring surgeon. There are few dos and don'ts that Turnbull doesn't cover in this helpful manual. And in the end she instructs us with such wry wit and goodwill that we feel we've communed with Mother Earth! Grady Harp, January 2005

I purchased this book a few years ago, and keep going back to it over and over. It is very readable, very clear, and well organized. It's also fun to read, with unexpected humor everywhere. Buy this one and keep it handy; you'll need it.

In all the years of my gardening experience - pruning has been the one activity that has given me the most trouble. Ms. Turnbull explains the concepts and practical applications needed to make the activity of pruning almost worry-free. You have to be aware of what you are doing and read carefully and act accordingly to what she is sharing with us - but, just 'follow directions' and you will not have any trouble. This is the book to have as a constant reference - time and time again if you want to really get close to those trees you love so much in your garden and landscape.

In my opinion, this is an excellent guide for beginners or experienced pruners, and represents quite a departure from the average pruning book format and formula. Pruning book authors should take heed of the fact that the information in this book is highly USABLE and approachable. Do not be deterred if you don't know who Cass Turnbull is or never heard of Sasquatch Books. This is a little gem that you will miss if you only buy your books at the local chain bookstore. Cass Turnbull has been pruning and teaching about it for probably 20 years, and the book represents the voice of all that experience and skill. Translated, that means she not only knows how to prune, but she can also teach others to do it. She started Plant Amnesty, a Seattle-based nonprofit devoted to stopping the senseless mutilation through mal-pruning of shrubs and trees. People in the Northwest know her and love her; in my opinion, she deserves to become well known in the rest of the country. Cass provides lots of details but they are very easy to understand. The book contains thorough instructions (several PAGES each) on pruning a commonly-used landscaping shrubs and vines.

See the book's table of contents to find out if the plants you want to prune are included. I think the book's subtitle should be "Pruning for the Real World." I find that the key impressive feature of this book is that it integrates the theoretical "selective heading cut" and "thinning cut" type info with the real-life experience of crawling around in shrubs and deciding what to cut. In the real world, shrubs that should never be sheared are cut into geometric forms regularly, or, people get busy and neglect their shrubs and then try to figure out what to do about them.. In the real world, owners of such shrubs often don't know how to deal with the result. In the real world people make pruning errors and don't know how to fix them. Or, even though you understand how to make the cuts, you don't understand WHAT to cut and why for aesthetic improvement. The book addresses those situations, and explains how to undo pruning messes or gradually rejuvenate overgrown shrubs. The concept of the pruning budget - how much you can prune without stimulating ugly and fast regrowth -- is explained and defined for many of the shrubs in the book. By the way, Cass also has a sense of humor which is amply displayed in the text and the illustrations. This subject doesn't have to be dry and boring! The biggest mystery for me of pruning an unknown shrub is "How will it respond?" It's like a dark tunnel with no light at the end when you don't know from firsthand experience what will happen when you cut a branch off. Quirks of individual shrubs are explained (squiggly regrowth on rhododendrons, the tendency of dogwood and Viburnum to sucker/water sprout very easily).

Problems you will encounter and decisions you will have to make are covered, and improving the way a shrub looks without drastically cutting it back are explained. I find myself reading and re-reading the information-packed sections to glean more information. I think the unique thing about this book is that you gain something of the many years of Cass's experience rather than a brief formula. Basic information plus more subtle points are included. So many war stories are included that I found it quickly boosted my judgment and confidence in pruning. In future editions, I would like to see an even more detailed section on tools with even more about important features and maintenance of more saws, pruners, shears and loppers. Cass also gives burning bush (*Euonymus alata*) high marks, I disagree, since it is proving to be very invasive in the Northeast and is ruining some of our lovely forests, I would like to see it on the "Not recommended - one pruning cut at the base" list. On topics that have been covered extensively and that are said to have many subtleties, such as rose or Clematis pruning, Cass simplifies rather than complicates, and some may desire more details than are provided. Minor quibbles. I don't think anyone who buys this book will be sorry. If you are also pruning many unusual shrubs, buy an additional "1001 shrubs" type of pruning book as an adjunct. This one will build your pruning prowess fast; the other will give you little tips on specific plants that will make much better sense once you've read and used Cass Turnbull's Guide

to Pruning. See the online table of contents for the trees and shrubs that are covered. Although this book is published by a Northwest US regional publisher, most of the plants covered in the book are grown also in the Northeast (and the book is actually intended to be useful all over the US). In all, a very usable and readable book at a very reasonable price.

End the senseless mutilation of trees and shrubs. Clear, concise, and with a sprinkle of good humor to boot. From PlantAmnesty [...] founder Cass Turnbull, this pruning guide is a must for gardeners everywhere! If you can get a hold of a copy, I also recommend the out-of-print book "The Complete Guide to Landscape Design, Renovation, and Maintenance: A Practical Handbook for the Home Landscape Gardener" updated 3/21/2006: new editions of both books mentioned in this review are now available.

Wish the book had more pictures instead of just written technique. I am a visual learner and pictures of the pruning process would have been more helpful to me.

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