

Pruning & Indoor Herb Growing



Photo: Goods
by Black Rose

Produced through The Northern Rhode Island Conservation District's
Providence County Urban Growers Leadership Program,
in partnership with Priscilla Vargas of the **Goods by Black Rose**.



Table of Contents

About:	3
Pruning and Tools	4
Pruning Trees & Shrubs	6
Starting Herbs	8
Pruning Herbs	9
Drying Herbs	10
Best Herbs to Grow	11

About Goods by Black Rose

Goods by Black Rose is a woman-owned business that makes tea blends, sea moss, skin care products, and offers hands-on workshops on how to make and use these products in your own home. Their farm is located at Bami Farm, in Johnston, RI.

Priscilla: Priscilla is a local herbalist, gardener, beginning farmer. She is a 2022 UGLP participant and has been a grower for three (3) seasons.

Priscilla studied herbalism under Mary Blue who has a shop called **Farmacy Herbs**, located in Providence. She took the level one herbalism course online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She then completed the Farmacy Herbs farm internship program where participants go to the farm once a week and learn on the job.

Then, Priscilla studied with the **The Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association (RINLA)** and is a certified RI Horticulturist through their program.



Pruning is a process that removes stored energy & growing points from the plant.

By removing the least amount of branch material within your goal, you allow the plant to keep the highest amount of energy stored. Pruning is also done when you want to prevent a plant from completing its life cycle, as in not letting it go to the flowering or seed stage.

Why prune?

- Aesthetic enjoyment
 - Safety
- View enhancement
 - Privacy
- Fruit Management

Tools:

Bi-pass pruners & lopping shears - good for smaller branches typically 1 inch in diameter.

Handsaws, bow saws & chainsaws - good for larger cuts over 1 inch in diameter.

Hedge shears & trimmers

Note: You might not need all these tools. You will need to know what you are growing and your garden needs to determine which tools would be best for your growing situation.



Bow Saw



Hedge Shears



Pruning Saw with D Grip



Lopping Shears



Pruning Saw with Crescent Grip



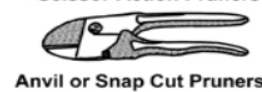
Combination Pole Saw-Pruner



Folding Saw



Draw Cut or Scissor-Action Pruners



Anvil or Snap Cut Pruners

Snips: Slightly stronger clippers than your home scissors and are used mainly to prune delicate herbs

Hand-pruners: You could use for delicate plants and can also be used for thicker more woodier plants and branches

Folding saw: Having a folding saw can help cut stronger plants/branches that are stronger and hard to cut with your hand pruners. You can cut through anything that a bow-saw can cut through with this but with a little more time and effort.

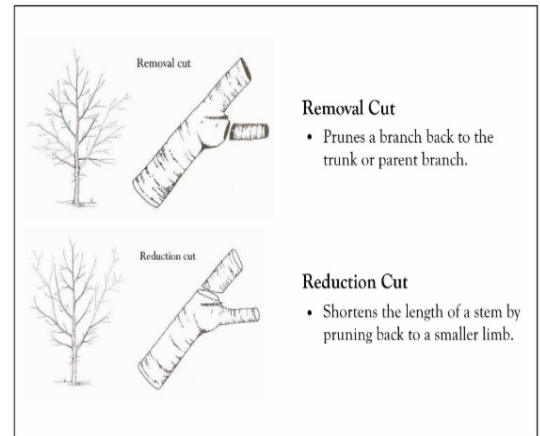
Types of Pruning

Branch removal cut

Removes the smaller of two branches at an union. Retains branch collar and branch bark ridge when present. No flush cuts.

Reduction cut

Shortens a branch by removing a stem back to a lateral branch. Cut back to a lateral branch that is at least one third the diameter of the cut stem.



Heading cut

Made to control the way a young branch grows. Need to be carefully placed; they encourage new side growth while discouraging main stem from growing longer.

These cuts involve cutting a limb to a stub, bud or lateral branch less than 1/3 diameter of the branch of stem being removed.

Shearing cut

Cutting leaves, sprouts and branches to a desired plane, shape and form. Removing only a portion of new growth, you may combine shearing with branch removal to maintain plant size.



Iowa State University

When to prune

- Plants are able to heal their wounds faster in spring & early summer.
- Removing dead, broken, decaying/diseased parts can be done at any time of year.
- Pruning at certain times of the year will either enhance or prevent flowering.
- To enhance flowering on plants that bloom on the current season's growth (roses, forsythia, rose of sharon, butterfly bush), prune in the winter or early spring before new year's growth or after it's finished blooming for the year.
- To enhance flowering of plants that flower on last year's growth (crab apples, cherries, hydrangeas, azaleas), prune after they bloom.



Texas A&M University

Pruning fruit trees:

It is never too late to prune!

Start with any branches that are broken or diseased, and any branches that are growing inside a crossing (you can prune these any time of the year because you want to take that away as soon as possible on a tree in order to make space for new growth and prevent damage to old growth)



The ideal time to prune is later fall, early winter, or early spring

You want to prune when the tree is dormant and not having much activity, such as flowering, budding, or producing fruit

Start by pruning slowly and steady because you might not need to cut as much back as you originally thought. It is better to cut too little than too much. Reduction cuts to current nodes or points are most important



[dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com/)

Trees, shrubs, and fruits:

Raspberries: These bushes produce edible berries. They are a woody perennial. Raspberry leaves are excellent for women's reproductive health. To propagate a raspberry bush, take a cutting of a branch, place it in a cup of water at the base of the leaf and see if it will grow roots. You can also add root hormone to the stem and water to help promote the roots to grow.

Sun Exposure: direct sun



University of Illinois

Hydrangeas: These are common non-native ornamental shrubs that love rain.

What type of hydrangea you have (new vs. old growth) will decide how you should prune it

Blooming on old growth/old wood -
prune after the flowers fade

Blooming on new growth - prune in late winter and early spring



finegardening.com

Mugwort: Be sure to properly identify it (back of the leaves is silvery)! Pregnant women should not touch or deal with mugwort because it is known to induce a menstrual cycle. Unfortunately, it is an invasive plant. However, it works wonders for clearing out for your respiratory system, and is a great herb for tea or smoking.



Doug Goldman, USDA NRCS

Pawpaw: Native fruit tree to the Eastern United States and Southern Ontario, Canada. The fruit tastes similar to a banana, mango, and pineapple. The bark was traditionally used by Native Americans and settlers for making ropes, fishing nets, and mats. They need well-drained, fertile soil with a pH of 5.5-7.0. Established trees need to be watered one to two times a week depending on temperature and humidity. **Sun Exposure: they can grow in shade but they produce the most fruit in full sun**



NPR

Starting Herbs:



Starting in ground:

Start after the last frost and plant seeds directly in ground

Indoors (with soil):

Start your herbs indoors in early spring (March/April), regardless whether you're transplanting cuttings or growing from seed.

Prepare a container with indoor potting mix and place it in a sunny window.

Starting from Seeds: You can start your seedlings in seed trays, cover trays with clear plastic wrap, put trays in a sunny window or an indoor greenhouse under grow lights

Starting from Transplant cuttings: place cuttings in a small glass with water (you can dip them in root growth before placing them in water to increase the success of your cuttings) and place them in a sunny window.

Plant your seeds or transplant cuttings that have grown roots in water. Make sure the soil stays moist by using a tray cover or covering with plastic wrap.

Once they've grown two sets of leaves or the cuttings have rooted in the soil, you can move them from their greenhouse environment and move them to their permanent spot. Transplant to individual containers and place them under proper lighting/humidity.

Pruning Herbs

What supplies you need:

Proper lighting conditions - Note: herbs native to a warm region need a south-facing window in the winter, while herbs that like it a little cooler can survive in a west-facing window in winter

You can use grow lights to assist with lighting if needed

Indoor growing greenhouse can also be helpful for creating specific humidity conditions.

Indoor potting mix with proper nutrients needed.

Hydroponic systems are also great alternatives.

Examples of Indoor Herb Growing

Aside from harvesting, the goal of pruning is to guide your plant to a fuller and more compact shape, it also prevents the plant from finalizing its life cycle. Things to remember: Don't take more than one third of the plant at a time, and always make clean cuts (don't tear), and pruning is good for plants!

The more you prune it, the more bushier it will become and give you more leaf/crop

Repeatedly pruning your herbs will help with continual harvesting because it prevents the plant from going to the flowering/seed stage. Once plants start to flower it is using all its energy on that phase and no longer producing leaves.

Once the plant has gone to the flowering stage, it puts all its energy into the flower, and loses some of its medicinal potency in the leaves

The smallest leaves are the ones that are the most potent for medicinal purposes



2 Types of Pruning for Herbs

Thinning Cut - used to make a plant more open for light & airflow. A thinning cut is when you trace a stalk down to the base and cut it off entirely.

Herbs that respond best to this type of pruning have “Radial Growth”: cilantro, dill, parsley, arugula, scallions, lettuce, kale

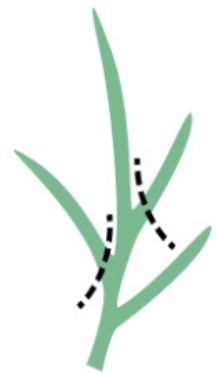
Heading Cut - used to make a plant bushier. It's done by cutting the growth tip – the top of a growing stalk. The plant redirects the growth energy to produce side shoots off of that stalk. Helps produce more leaves, giving you a fuller and more compact plant.

Herbs that respond well to this type of pruning have “Branching Growth”: mint, oregano, basil, lemon balm, thyme, sage, rosemary

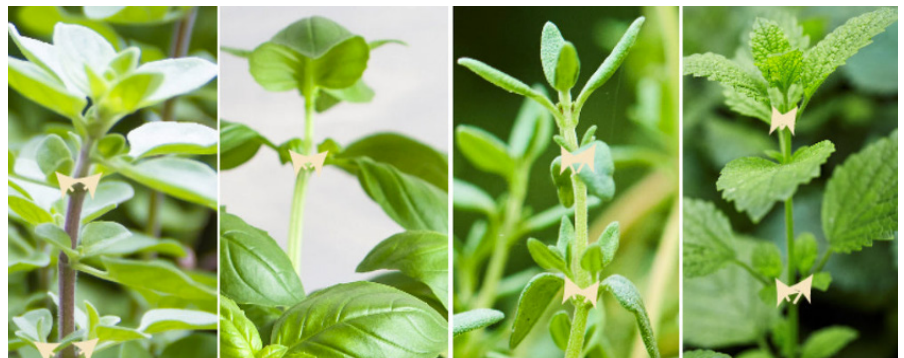
Repeatedly pruning your herbs will help with continual harvesting because it prevents the plant from going to the flowering/seed stage. Once plants start to flower it is using all its energy on that phase and no longer producing leaves.



heading



thinning



Drying:

Be sure to wash all the herbs before doing anything with them

Drying herbs on the counter:

You can leave it out on the counter top with some separation between the leaves so that there is airflow for drying. If you do not spread the leaves out it will trap moisture and create mold!

Drying herbs in the Oven:

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spread the herbs evenly on the baking sheet. Put your herbs in the oven at low temperature for 2-4 hours or until they are completely dry

Drying herbs in a herb dryer:

Follow the instructions on the herb dryer. Most of these systems will have their list of temperatures and time you can follow to drying your herbs

Indoor Herb Growing

To grow herbs indoors, you need a sunny window or indoor grow lights/indoor greenhouse, a pest-free plant (if buying an adult herb plant as opposed to growing one from seed, inspect seedlings carefully for pests/disease before introducing them to your home operation), a selection of herbs that grow well indoors, and, of course, knowledge about each plant's needs.



Mother Earth Living

Best types of herbs to grow indoors

Basil - Grow in a large, deep pot.
Sun exposure: south-facing window in winter

Oregano - profit from having a little extra humidity.
Sun exposure: south-facing window in winter

Parsley - the curly type has more ornamental value. But the flat-leaf type has more culinary value. Sun exposure: can survive in a west-facing window in winter

Rosemary - needs a lot of humidity (build a tent around it to trap moisture). Sun Exposure: south-facing window in winter

Cilantro - Plant cilantro in a plastic pot to retain moisture, cut back regularly to stop bolting/flowering. Sun exposure: morning sun in an east-facing window or a window with very bright light

Spearmint - known for spreading quickly, it's a great indoor pot plant to keep maintained. Sun exposure: west-facing window in winter

Peppermint: prolific grower that is recommended to be grown in a pot because it will take over. If you continue to trim it, it will continue to grow and expand. You can add it to any tea for a refreshing taste. It is also beneficial for your digestive system.
Sun Exposure: full sun exposure

Lemon balm: is in the mint family but has a lemon-like odor. It contains both vitamin C and B. It has anti-viral, antibacterial, antifungal and mood elevating properties. Sun Exposure: full sun exposure

Thyme - does not like humidity, best to keep in a dry room with very little watering as it's drought tolerant. Sun exposure: south-facing window in winter

Lavender: it is a woody perennial. Lavender is beautiful to look at, it is known for its aromatherapy and culinary benefits (such as teas). It can also help repel bugs such as mosquitos, fleas, moths, and ticks and attracts beneficial pollinators into the garden. Sun Exposure: At least six (6) hours of direct sunlight a day

Sage: grow in well drained soil. It is used mainly for culinary spice, in medicine and essential oils. It is rich in antioxidants. Research is limited but can possibly help with mouth sores, mood, memory cholesterol levels. Sun Exposure: full sun



University of Alabama



Kathrine Irwin



Grangetto's Farm and Garden Supply