



Are you emerging from winter hibernation and enjoying the warmth of the sun? Your plants, shrubs, and trees are, too! Now is the perfect time to rejuvenate and refresh your home's landscape.

This winter's freezing temperatures may have affected your plants. The prolonged cold spells, sudden temperature fluctuations, and strong winds can contribute to plant damage. To help recover, many plants can benefit from rejuvenation pruning, which involves removing freeze-damaged areas, dead tissue, and overgrown or unbalanced branches, allowing the plant to develop new, healthy growth.

Here are some steps for rejuvenation pruning:

1. Remove all dead branches, stems, and other dead plant tissue.

2. Assess the plant's appearance after the initial removal. If it no longer retains its natural shape, additional pruning may be necessary to improve its form.
3. Rejuvenation pruning is most effective on multi-stemmed, twiggy, and deciduous shrubs. It can also be applied to perennials and ornamental grasses, which can be cut back to a height of 4 to 6 inches.

Plants that require rejuvenation can either be hard pruned all at once in early spring or gradually pruned back a small amount at a time, starting in spring and continuing through summer. However, pruning at the wrong time can cause stress for your plants. For best results, prune in early spring before the buds break.

After pruning, refresh your landscape with mulch and fertilize all your plants to encourage rapid recovery and vigorous growth. This rejuvenation and refresh process will significantly enhance the appearance of your landscape as your plants regrow and flourish.



PHOTO: AMAZON



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GARDENING TOOL TIP: All-purpose pruners are essential tools to aid with rejuvenation– *Felco F-2 One-Hand Pruning Shears* and *Fiskars 15-inch Loppers* can be found on Amazon

BUSTING WATERING MYTHS

By Jacob Cheatham

Knowing the best way to water your landscape in Texas can be tricky! Let's bust some myths about watering that can help you save water and have a healthier landscape.



Myth 1: Most plants die from lack of water

Did you know that most plant deaths in residential landscapes are caused by overwatering, not underwatering? Water is an essential resource for plant roots, but it is only half of what they need. Roots also need to breathe! When plants are overwatered, the air in the soil is squeezed out, and the roots can suffocate.

So, how do you prevent overwatering? There are two ways to determine whether your plants need water. The first is to feel the soil. Feel the soil with your fingers at 2-4 inches depth. Does it feel moist? If so, don't water! If the soil is dry, turn your irrigation system on. The following method is to look at the plants themselves. If leaves start to wilt or turn yellow, it is time to turn on the water. However, sometimes overwatered plants can look the same as underwatered ones, so it is good to verify by checking the soil.

Myth 2: It is better to run your irrigation system for a short time more frequently

The best way to encourage a healthy root system so plants require less water in the future is to water them deeply with less frequency. When plants receive shallow watering, their roots are not encouraged to grow deep for water. Deeper root growth is encouraged when irrigation systems can saturate the soil more deeply.

But water tends to run off with our clay soils before it seeps into the soil! This problem can be solved by having multiple run times for a single watering event. For example, if it takes 21 minutes of running spray heads to saturate the soil, break that time into three different run times of 7 minutes with a break in between to allow the water to seep in.

Myth 3: Irrigation systems work just as well as natural rainfall

There is no substitute for a good rain! Natural rainfall has a couple of advantages over an irrigation system. Even the best-designed irrigation systems can have poor coverage. There may be some spots that are over-watered and some that are under-watered. Good rain will provide much more water, even watering.

Did you know that rainwater also comes with its fertilizer? Lightning strikes fix nitrogen from the air and make it available through rainfall for plant use. Rain droplets also pick up other minerals from the air and transport them to the soil as they fall. That green-up after a needed rain is not a fluke. It's because of nature's fertilizer!

Watering your home landscape does not have to be a mystery. If you pay attention to the signs your landscape is giving you and follow the watering guidelines listed above, you should enter the summer with plants that are well-adapted to needing less water.

LANDSCAPING EVENTS FOR MARCH

- Set irrigation to only run ONCE every 2-weeks and less if receiving rain; turn off until May if it keeps raining
- Mow your turf short, and dethatch (if needed)
- Aerate your turf before application of pre-emergent & fertilizer
- Apply pre-emergent weed control
- Fertilize trees this month with 1/3 to 1/2 pounds of turf fertilizer per inch of tree trunk diameter—spread the fertilizer evenly from the trunk past the tree's drip line
- Start planning for spring color

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