



**Countryhouse
at Farrington**

**Plant
Identification and
Pruning
Handbook**

Betty King

2022



Foreword

This guide is very general in its approach and is not intended to cover every plant or every situation. Since it is written specifically for Countryhouse landscaping guidance, some of my statements may not be completely valid outside of Fearrington but are merely meant to emphasize certain common practices used here. The plants contained in this guide are the main ones used throughout our community.

In the firm belief that knowledge will lead to interest, appreciation and commitment, I have created this guide to promote understanding of our landscaping services as well as gardening support to our homeowners. Its sole purpose is to enhance our homes and neighborhood.

Happy Gardening,

Betty King

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Identification Tips

- **Look at the shape of the leaves**

Are the lobes pointed? Like maple

Are the leaves generally oval? Like dogwood

Are the lobes rounded? Like oak

Do the points radiate out from a central point, like a hand? As in a sweet gum



- **Look at the edges of the leaves.**

Are they smooth, like Rhododendron and Illicium?

Do they have teeth, like Camellia and Sasanqua?

Do they have spines, like some hollies and Osmanthus?




- **Look at the way the leaves are arranged on the stem.**

Are they alternating, like hollies? (Most shrubs are.)


Are they opposite each other, like Abelia and Viburnum?



- **Look at the habit of the shrub.**

Is it upright, like laurels? 

Is it arching, like Leucothoe? 

Is it drooping, like the yaupon holly, 'Pendula'? 



Laurel



Leucothoe



'Pendula'

Abelia – *Abelia x grandiflora*

(ah-beel'-ya)

Description

Abelia is a multi-stemmed, fast-growing shrub with long arching branches. The small, opposite leaves are a lustrous dark green in summer turning bronze in winter. Small tubular white to pink flowers appear in summer. After flowers are gone, colorful sepals (which appear to be flowers but are not) persist for months, giving the illusion of a long flowering period. Best in full sun.

Pruning

This energetic plant will grow to 6' or more without pruning. If a smaller size is desired, it will need regular pruning to keep it in bounds. It benefits from being cut to the ground every few years to allow it to rejuvenate and bush out.

'Kaleidoscope' is a dwarf, yellow cultivar that should not need much pruning except to cut out dead wood or to keep tidy. Hand prune when necessary.



'Kaleidoscope'



Aucuba – *Aucuba japonica*

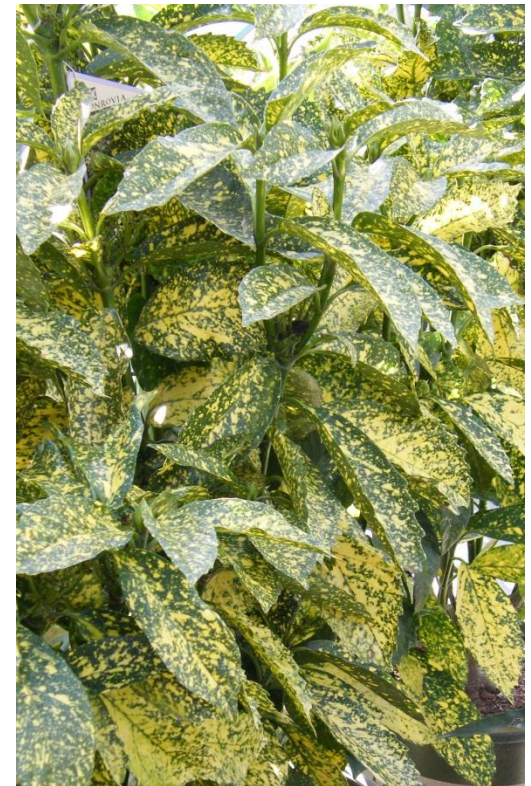
(ah-kew'-ba jah-pon'-ih-kah)

Description

Aucuba is used primarily in its variegated form although the leaves also come in solid green. Various spots, dots, and splashes mix yellow on the green foliage. Leaves are large and opposite and slightly toothed. This is an eye-catching shade plant but unfortunately the deer love it, so its use is restricted in Ferrington.

Pruning

Since our use of this beautiful plant is limited because of the deer problem, we have very few to prune in Ferrington. When pruned however, hand pruning is recommended.



Barberry – *Berberis thunbergii* ‘Crimson Pygmy’ or ‘Atropurpurea Nana’

(ber'-ber-is thun-ber'-gee-eye)

Description

These two barberries have small, mouse-eared leaves that vary in shades of purple or maroon. Many thorns make them difficult to handle. They are deciduous, meaning they lose their leaves in winter, but the summer color makes them a useful landscaping plant. Best in full sun.

Pruning

These two barberries are dwarfs so they will stay relatively small. They need occasional pruning, however, to keep them compact. Hand pruning is desired, but shearing is acceptable since handling can be painful, although the form will become artificial.



‘Rose Glow’

Boxwood – Little leaf boxwood, Common boxwood

Buxus microphylla; *Buxus sempervirens*

(buck'-sus my'-kro-fy'-lah; buck'-sus sem'-per-vy'-rens)

Description

Boxwoods have been used in horticultural settings for hundreds of years – and for good reason. They are long lived, adapt to sun or light shade, are easy to maintain and deer do not bother them. Both have opposite, small, glossy green leaves that sometimes turn a disagreeable yellow in winter. Some may grow to 30' and others are dwarfs that stay below 3'. They are susceptible to a host of plant ills but in my opinion are still valuable landscape plants.

Pruning

I prefer hand clipping individual twigs to keep boxwoods looking natural. They are slow growing but respond well to shearing if size reduction or tidying-up are needed., although the shape will become artificial



Most are deep, glossy green



Some yellow in winter



Variegated boxwood is a lovely plant that is one of my favorites.

Camellia and Sasanqua – *Camellia japonica* and *Camellia sasanqua*

(kah-mil'-i-a jah-pon'-eh-kah, sah-san'-kwa)

Description

These two camellias are the loveliest of shrubs . Glossy, slightly-toothed, dark green leaves adorn the shrubs throughout the year, and various-colored flowers cover it in the winter and early spring. Unfortunately, deer will nibble young plants, but it is worth extra effort to get it established.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

I cannot bear to see this handsome plant sheared into an artificial ball. Its natural habit is loose, so hand prune when necessary to keep stray twigs in bounds.



Sasanqua

Camellia



Sasanqua



Improper
pruning



Chindo – *Viburnum awabuki* ‘Chindo’

(vi-bur'-num aw-wah-boo'-kee)

Description

Chindo viburnum is a large-stemmed handsome shrub with long, glossy, smooth-edged leaves that grow opposite each other. Give it full to partial sun. Since it can get quite large, it should be used as a screen plant rather than a border plant next to a house. It needs room to grow.

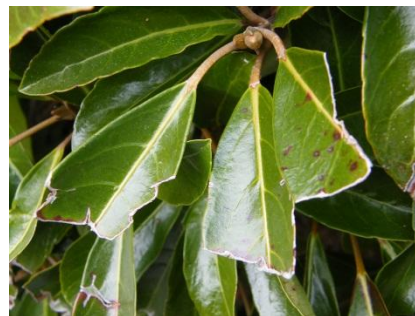
Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Shearing destroys individual leaf shapes leaving ugly stumps and the overall form will become artificial. Allow it to spread out. Hand pruning is desired.

Artificial form



Leaves mutilated.



Gold Mop – *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Golden Mop'

(kam-ah-sip'-ah-ris piss-if'-er-ah)

Description

Commonly called thread-leaved cypress, this dwarf (which actually reaches 5') has slender, stringy, drooping tips that are yellowish-green. It resembles an unruly mop head. Color is best in full sun.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

If necessary to keep tidy or reduce size, hand snip long shoots or central leaders. Do not cut into old wood. Never shear.



Sheared – This plant took two years to recover.

Winter daphne – *Daphne odora* ‘Aureomarginata’ (daf'-nee oh-dor'-a aur'-e-o-mar'-gin-ah-tah)

Description

Daphnes are notoriously cranky, sometimes dying for no good reason. Other than that annoying habit, they are lovely plants and worth the risk. A smallish shrub, it bears shiny leaves (this one with a yellow leaf margin) that cloak the plant year-round. Intensely fragrant pink flowers open in late winter and remain for weeks. Good drainage is a must and light shade is helpful. Plant it near an entrance and you will be rewarded many times over.

Pruning

Most Daphnes top out at about 3 ½' so hand pruning is only necessary to keep a good shape or trim wayward twigs.



Needlepoint holly – *Ilex cornuta* ‘Needlepoint’

(eye'-lecks kor-new'-tah)

Description

Needlepoints are all over Farrington. They can get big, up to 10' or more. The leaves are dark, glossy green, yellowish underneath and usually only have one spine at the tip. Many red berries appear in the fall. Like most hollies, a male and a female are needed for berry production. Unfortunately, deer are decimating this lovely, tolerant plant decreasing its usefulness.

Pruning

Shearing is used to keep this big shrub from getting too big. Do not shear to a flat-topped shape but try to keep it as natural looking as possible. Do not cut into the body of the plant unless its size needs to be reduced considerably. Try to take off only the long growing shoots.



Burford holly – *Ilex cornuta* ‘Burfordii’

(eye'-lecks kor-new'-tah ber-ford'-ee-eye)

Description

This holly is a very handsome, compact shrub with dark, glossy green leaves that are yellowish on the undersides. It looks much like a Needlepoint except that the leaves are larger and appear cupped. The leaves usually have only a single spine at the tip, but occasionally two side spines may be present. Burford hollies self-pollinate, so berry production is not dependent on a male and a female like most of the other hollies.

Pruning

This holly is commonly sheared although it destroys the natural lines and gives it an artificial shape. Resist cutting into the body and only take off the fast growing shoots.



Carissa holly – *Ilex cornuta* ‘Carissa’ (eye'-lecks kor-new'-tah)

Description

Carissa is a dwarf holly with pointed to rounded, somewhat puckered leaves. It usually forms a compact, rounded ball of yellowish/green foliage. No berries are produced. It is widely used in Ferrington. As of this writing, many are succumbing to disease and its future is questionable.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR**

Do not prune or shear. This plant is a dwarf and will not get too big. Shearing will stimulate unwanted growth, mutilate the leaves, and destroy its beauty.



Compacta holly – *Ilex crenata* ‘Compacta’

(eye'-lecks kre-nay'-tah)

Description

This shrub is a dense, rounded holly with small, gray/green leaves. It is sometimes confused with boxwood but its alternate leaves tell the truth. Tidy and well mannered, it is widely used in Ferrington.

Pruning

This plant may eventually get too large but that will take a long time. ‘Compacta’ naturally keeps its rounded form and should only be sheared every few years.

Even though these ‘Compactas’ have not been pruned in several years, they have not grown significantly, and have maintained their natural form.



Yaupon holly – *Ilex vomitoria* ‘Pendula’ and ‘Bordeaux’

(yoh'-pon hol'-lee - eye'-lecks vah-meh-tor'-ee-ah)

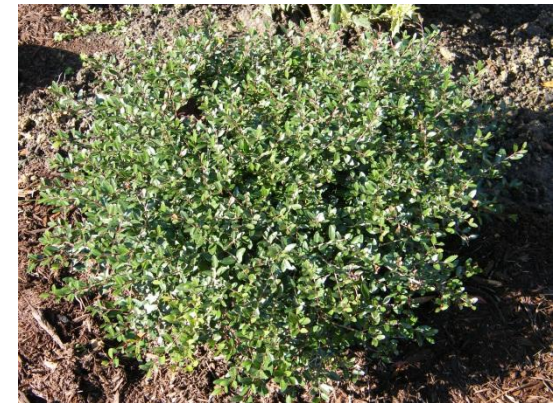
Description

Yaupon holly is a native shrub and is therefore thoroughly acclimated to our particularly trying climate. Drought-tolerant; needs sun for best performance. Small, slightly toothed leaves crowd this very tough holly and cradle the small, glassy red berries that grow along its stems. Stems often exhibit a purplish/white tinge. ‘Pendula’ is a weeping form and may reach tree size. ‘Bordeaux’ is a dwarf, rounded shrub that is extremely hardy.

Pruning

‘Pendula’ is routinely sheared although the natural weeping shape is somewhat lost in doing so. The dwarf ‘Bordeaux’ stays small enough that it rarely needs shearing or pruning.

‘Pendula’



‘Bordeaux’

Lusterleaf holly – *Ilex latifolia*

(eye˘-lecks lat-ih-fol˘-ee-ah)

Description

Lusterleaf holly is just that – a holly with large, leathery, toothed, shiny leaves. It looks much like Osmanthus except that the leaves are alternate instead of opposite. Berries are clustered in leaf axils. It is a large holly that should not be confined. Use as a screen.

Pruning – **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Shearing will disfigure the large, handsome leaves. Allow it to spread out. Hand pruning is best.



Illicium or Anise – *Illicium parviflorum*

(Il-leh'-see-um par-veh-flor'-um)

Description

Illicium is a native shrub that is usually considered a shade plant, although it will and does succeed in the sun. When crushed, the leaves release an anise fragrance. It is a rangy, open plant with smooth yellowish-green, leathery leaves. Flowers are small and maroon. Best in natural settings.

Pruning – **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Illicium requires pruning to stay compact. Hand pruning is necessary.



Japanese plum yew (low growing) – *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* ‘Prostrata’

sef-a-low-tax'-us hair-ing-tone'-ee-ah pros-tray'-tah)

Description

The Japanese plum yews come in 3 basic shapes – spreading, vase-shaped, and columnar. ‘Prostrata’ is a low-growing form. It sprawls out close to the ground, rarely rising above 2’. It generally prefers some shade.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Do not shear as it will mutilate the leaves and destroy its form and beauty. If it outgrows its bounds, cut individual twigs back to desired size.



Japanese plum yew (vase shaped) – *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* ‘Duke Gardens’ or ‘Drupacea’

(sef-a-low-tax'-us hair-ing-tone'-ee-ah dru-pay'-see-ah)

Description

These two cultivars grow in a vase shape. ‘Duke Gardens’ is smaller topping out at 3’ while ‘Drupacea’ will eventually grow to 5’-6’. In the spring, light green new growth contrasts with the darker old growth. It generally requires some shade and regular moisture. This is a premium plant that is rarely bothered by pests or deer.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Do not shear. Hand prune by cutting individual stems tips if reducing size becomes necessary. Shearing will destroy its shape and beauty.



New spring growth

Japanese plum yew (upright) –
Cephalotaxus harringtonia ‘Fastigiata’
(sef-a-low-tax'-us hair-ing-tone'-ee-ah fas-tige-ee-a'-tah)

Description

‘Fastigiata’ is an upright cultivar of the Japanese plum yew. It grows in a narrow column in shade. Give it sufficient moisture until established.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR, HAND PRUNE**

Do not shear. If it gets too tall, cut back individual stalks. Some routine hand pruning into the body will keep the cluster full. Shearing will destroy its natural form.



Juniper – *Juniperus sp.*

(june-eh'-per-us)

Description

There are many kinds of junipers and they range in form from sprawling to upright. The color is often a dull green but it, too, ranges from a lively green to yellow to bright blue and others. All are characterized by leaves that are needle-like or scale-like. Junipers are extremely adaptable and tolerant and have earned the reputation of being the toughest landscape shrub in use.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Junipers do not respond to shearing. If a plant outgrows its bounds, try hand pruning the green growing tips. New growth will not regenerate from old wood.



Juniper horizontalis 'Blue Rug'



J. conferta 'Blue Pacific'



J. chinensis 'Gold Lace'



J. squamata 'Blue Star'

Leucothoe – *Leucothoe populifolia* (now often seen as *Agarista populifolia*)

(lew-koe'-tho-wee pop'-you-leh-fole'-ee-ah)

Description

There are numerous species of Leucothoe but we generally only grow this particular one in Countryhouse. It is a native, shade-loving shrub which produces arching canes lined with leathery yellow/green leaves. In spring, white, bell-shaped flowers dangle beneath the stems. Its form lends itself to more natural settings. Keep moist.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE.**

Do not shear or cut from the top. It requires hand pruning in the body of the plant every year or two to keep it full.



Ligustrum or Japanese privet – *Ligustrum japonicum*

(leh-gus'-trum jah-pon'-ih-kah)

Description

Ligustrum is a large common hedge plant used primarily for its foliage. The small glossy, dark green leaves grow opposite each other on the stem and sometimes appear a bit curly. White flower clusters unfurl in late spring and emit an unpleasant odor. It is primarily a sun plant, but will tolerate some shade. Unfortunately, it is a host for a myriad of insects and diseases. Deer will decimate it so here in Ferrington its value is practically worthless.

Pruning

Ligustrum is commonly sheared and responds well to this type of pruning.



Loropetalum – *Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum* ‘Ruby’ or ‘Burgundy’

(lor-ah-pet'-ah-lum chine-en'-seh))

Description

The leaves of Loropetalum are oval-shaped with a slight point. They feel a bit sand-papery. It is a large shrub that is either a green variety or a purple variety. Shrubs in the sun will be fuller and more colorful than those grown in the shade. Early spring brings spectacular fringe-like pink flowers. Many cultivars are available now so one can get various plant sizes as well as leaf and flower colors.

Pruning

These plants can get large and rangy. They will stay more compact with regular pruning or shearing and will benefit from being hard pruned every few years.



Mahonia, Leatherleaf, or Oregon grape –

Mahonia bealei

(ma-hone'-ee-ah bee '-lee-eye)

Description

Sharp-pointed, spiny, blue/green leaves stand out at right angles to the slender stalk, giving this shade-loving plant an exotic look. Yellow flowers are borne above the leaves in winter and are followed by blue to black berries. Each plant has several stalks, or canes, and may reach 7' tall.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. PRUNE BY HAND.**

Maintain these plants just like Nandina: Never shear or cut from the top. Once a year, cut off the oldest canes 6" from the ground.



'Soft Caress' has no spines and is a dwarf. Has not been robust for us.

Nandina – *Nandina domestica*

(nan-deen'-ah dah-mes'-tee-ka)

Description

Delicate-looking pointed leaves emerge reddish in spring, turn green for summer, then reddish again for winter. Pendulous clusters of red berries decorate the plant in winter. Each plant has several stalks, or canes, and may stand 5' tall or more. It is a very tough, versatile plant that can take sun or part shade. Deer do not bother it. It ranks at the top of my list of dependable, useful plants.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. PRUNE BY HAND.**

Never, never shear this plant or cut from the top. Cut back the oldest canes once each year 6" from the bottom. No other pruning is necessary. See pruning details as this species requires a different kind of maintenance to stay full and attractive.



Winter

Dwarf nandina – *Nandina domestica*

‘Gulf Stream’

(nan-deen'-ah doe-mes'-tee-ka)

Description

This is a dwarf, a cultivar (horticulturally created variety) of the common, tall nandina. The leaves look exactly like the tall nandina, but the plant stays under 3' tall. It usually does not produce berries, but may occasionally.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR**

Do not prune or shear. This little beauty rarely needs pruning. Occasionally, spindly canes may need to be removed.



Winter

Spring



Firepower nandina – *Nandina domestica* ‘Firepower’

(nan-deen'-ah doe-mes'-tee-ka)

Description

This is a cultivar of the common tall nandina. It is a dwarf and stays below 2'. The leaves have a slightly bulbous appearance and are greenish/red in the summer but turn a stunning red in the winter which accounts for its name. No berries.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Never, never shear this plant or cut from the top. Occasionally, old clumps may need individual canes cut out in the same manner as its parent, the regular nandina.



Spring



Summer



Winter



Tea Olive – *Osmanthus heterophyllus*

Fragrant Tea Olive – *Osmanthus fragrans*

(oz-man'-thus het-er-oh-fye'-lus, fray'-grans)

Description

Osmanthus looks very much like holly except that the leaves are opposite instead of alternate. These large shrubs have spiny, leathery leaves and small, white, fragrant flowers in the spring and sporadically into the fall. It is very adaptable and succeeds in both sun and shade. So far, it has been totally deer resistant. *Fragrans* may be nipped by very cold temperatures.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. HAND PRUNE**

Osmanthus will be a more attractive shrub if it is hand pruned. The slow growing 'Goshiki' will need very little pruning. Go easy on this lovely cultivar and allow it to maintain its natural beauty by not shearing.

Tea Olive



Fragrant Tea Olive



'Goshiki'



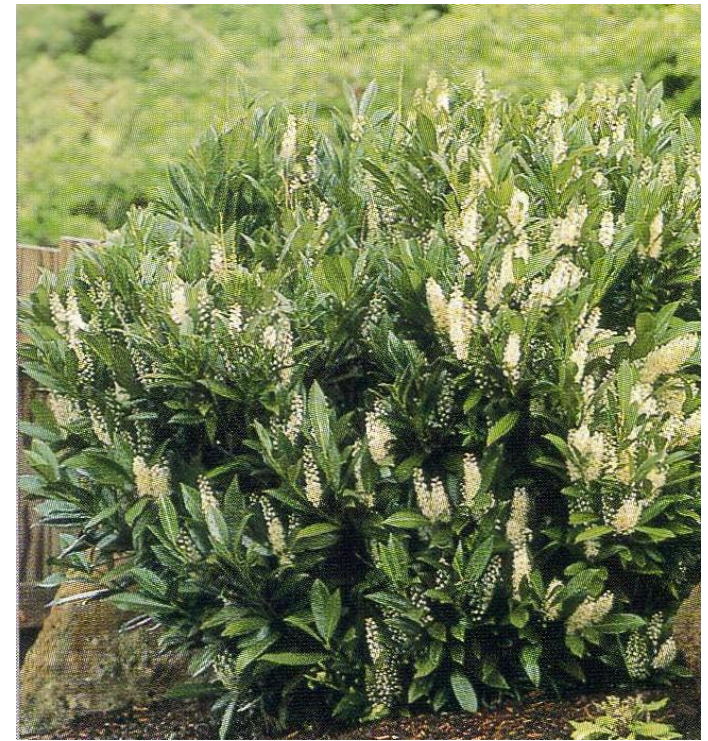
Otto Luyken – *Prunus laurocerasus* ‘Otto Luyken’ (ah'-toe loo'ken, proo'-nus laur'-oh-ser-a'-sus)

Description

This is a dwarf, a cultivar (horticulturally created variety) of the tall cherry laurel and is tolerant of both sun and shade. It's glossy, pointed, dark green leaves make it one of the handsomest of shrubs. White flower spikes appear in summer. It may grow to 3' in many years. It is often bothered by a shothole disease which produces small holes in the leaves.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR. PRUNE BY HAND.**

Do not prune or shear. This plant is a dwarf and should not get too big. Shearing will mutilate the leaves and destroy its beauty. When necessary, hand prune.



Rhododendron – *Rhododendron* sp.

(roe-doe-den'-dron)

Description

Rhododendron is a large, shade-loving native shrub which produces a glorious display of blooms in the early summer. Leaves are leathery, 6" – 8" long, and 1" – 1 ½" wide. Deer have begun nibbling on the very leathery leaves. Recent hot, dry summers are making it difficult to grow this lovely shrub.

Pruning - **DO NOT SHEAR, HAND PRUNE**

Do not shear or cut from the top. It requires hand pruning in the body of the plant every few years to keep it full.



A properly pruned rhododendron will remain full even in old age.



Improperly pruned. Should never have a flat top or be cut from the top.



Fragrant Sweetbox – *Sarcococca rusifolia*

Sweetbox – *Sarcococca confusa*

(sar-koh-kock'-ah ruse-ih-fole'-ee-ah, kon-fuse'-ah)

Description

The sweetboxes are small shrubs that tolerate dry shade. Small, fragrant white flowers located in the leaf axils bloom in late winter/early spring followed by red berries that turn black. Leaves are dark, glossy green. It is refined and well-behaved.

Pruning

Since *Sarcococca* is naturally a small shrub, pruning is rarely necessary to reduce size. When needed, hand prune to keep them bushy or to control occasional unruly twigs.

Sarcococca rusifolia



Sarcococca confusa



Spirea – *Spiraea japonica* ‘Gold Mound’ (spy-ree'-ah jah-pon'-ih-kah)

Description

There are many kinds of spirea. This particular one is a low-growing dwarf with golden leaves that are shed in the winter. Pink flowers rise just above the mound in early summer. It needs sun to look its best.

Pruning

This dwarf is small enough that it should never outgrow its bounds, but it may benefit from light shearing every other year or so.



Wax myrtle – *Myrica cerifera*

(my'-reh-kah ser-if'-er-ah)

Description

Wax myrtle is native to our region and is a tough, hardy shrub that has been used extensively throughout Fearington. The light green leaves are slightly toothed and when crushed emit a spicy fragrance. Gray berries cling to the interior stems and are coated with a waxy substance. Wax myrtles can reach 25' or more so will require constant pruning if it is used as a small shrub.

Pruning

Wax myrtles are commonly sheared and respond well to this type of pruning but will need periodic hard pruning to keep it full.



Berries

Yucca – *Yucca filamentosa*

(yuk'-ah fil-ah-men-tow'-sah)

Description

Yuccas are tough, native plants that can survive even the hottest, driest sites. Their sword-like leaves make them instantly recognizable. They need excellent drainage. Watch out for Yucca beetles.

Pruning

Yuccas never need pruning unless the stalk eventually grows too tall. Cut back flower stalk after blooming. Removal of the lower dead leaves will tidy them up.



'Color Guard' in flower



'Color Guard' yellow with green edges



'Bright Edge' green with yellow edges

Maiden Grass – *Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Morning Light’

(miss-kan'-thus seye-nen'-sis)

Description

These grasses are commonly called ornamental grasses. *Miscanthus* is a refined, medium-sized clump of grass that may reach 4'. The leaves are very slender with a white line down the middle of the otherwise dull green leaf. Silvery-pink plumes appear in late summer and persist throughout the winter above the tawny foliage. Needs full sun to look its best.

Pruning

Cut the entire clump down to about 1' in winter. New growth will appear above it in spring and a new clump will grow.



Summer



Flower



Fall



Winter

Fountain Grass – *Pennisetum alopecuroides*

(pen-eh-see'-tum a-low'-pee-cure-oi'-dees)

Description

Fountain grass is a small, sun-loving ornamental grass that stays under 2' tall. The light-green clump of grass sends up spikes of fuzzy foxtail-like flowers in fall. A dwarf, 'Hamlin' is available if smaller plants are needed.

Pruning

Cut the entire clump down to about 3" in winter. New growth will appear above it in spring and a new clump will grow.



Muhly Grass – *Muhlenbergia capillaris*

(mule'-ee, mew-len-ber'-gia kap-eh-lair'-es)

Description

This small ornamental grass is a native and is characterized by very thin upright leaves. It goes relatively unnoticed throughout the summer, but in late fall, pink flowers seem to hover above the plant like a delicate cloud. The late-year slanting sun highlights its airy, dainty quality to produce a spectacular show. Give this little beauty full sun for best show.

Pruning

Cut the entire clump down to about 3" in winter. New growth will appear above it in spring and a new clump will grow.

Winter look



Grass-like – *Acorus*, *Carex*, *Liriope*, *Ophiopogon*

(ah-kor'-us, care'-ex, lah-rye'-o-pee, oh-fee-oh-poe'-gahn)

Description

While placed in different botanical genera, these useful plants all display a grass-like appearance. They have thin, arching to upright blades, either green or variegated, with most springing from a central clump, although *Liriope* and mondo grass will spread. They all remain small and can serve as dramatic points of interest in your garden. Deer will munch *Liriope* but do not seem to bother the others. All need some moisture.

Pruning

If tattered, cut the entire clump of *Liriope* down to about 3" in winter. New growth will appear above it in spring and a new clump will grow. *Acorus*, *Carex*, and *Ophiopogon* do not need cutting back unless they become ratty.



Acorus (sweet flag)



Carex (sedge)



Liriope (monkey grass)



Ophiopogon (mondo grass)

Crepe Myrtle – *Lagerstroemia indica*

(la-ger-strow'-mia en'-dih-kah)

Description

Crepe Myrtles are small trees that are symbolic of the Southern U.S. Throughout the summer, various shades of pink-to-white crinkly flowers adorn the multi-trunked tree. Winter reveals the beautiful, smooth, sinewy, sometimes blotchy trunks.

Pruning

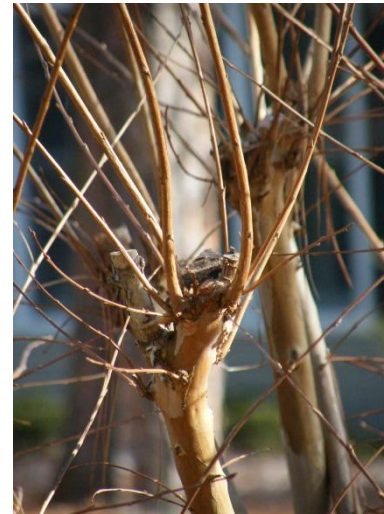
Never, under threat of death, should this handsome tree be pruned. Pruning cuts will produce a profusion of weak shoots and destroy its silhouette and natural form. Thinning out crossed branches and suckers and snipping off pencil-sized tips that cut off the past season's seed pods are the only suggested pruning. There are many small cultivars available now so one should never have a crepe myrtle that needs pruning because it is too large for its site.



Crepe paper-like flowers account for this lovely tree's name.



Chopping off limbs leaves stubs and produces a profusion of unwanted twigs.

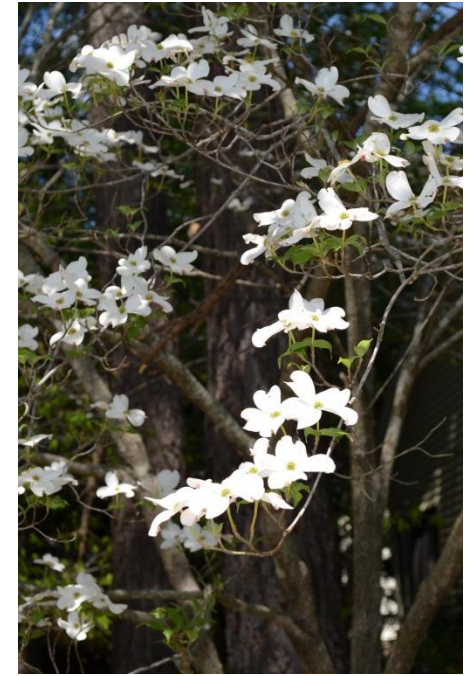


Bad pruning. The site of each cut is clearly seen. It's jokingly called 'Crepe Murder' because it effectively 'kills' the natural beauty.

Dogwood – *Cornus florida*

(kor'-nus flor'-eh-dah)

This lovely, small tree bears white or pinkish flowers that arrange themselves in a layered effect each spring. The individual flowers have four 'petals' which are not true petals, but are bracts, a modified leaf structure. The true flowers are the yellow center of the inflorescence. Fall leaves often turn a stunning deep red. Dogwoods are susceptible to many diseases, especially anthracnose, which is currently causing great concern for this aristocratic tree.



Japanese Maple – *Acer palmatum*

(a'-ser pahl-may'-tum)

There are many cultivars of this wonderful small tree. Most are characterized by finely cut leaves, with color ranging from bright green to orange to burgundy. It normally settles into a broadly rounded form and is refined and elegant - one of the best!



Spring color – same tree



Fall color



Magnolia – *Magnolia grandiflora*

(mag-no'-lee-ah gran-deh-flor'-ah)

Description

Reaching 60' or more, southern Magnolia is a large evergreen tree that is practically an icon of Southern culture. It bears attractive 6" – 8" glossy green leaves with fuzzy brown undersides. Its stunning, white, fragrant flowers (one source says 'better than the best perfume') may measure 10" across. It also has a reputation of being a messy tree, dropping spent seed pods and leaves that never seem to decompose.

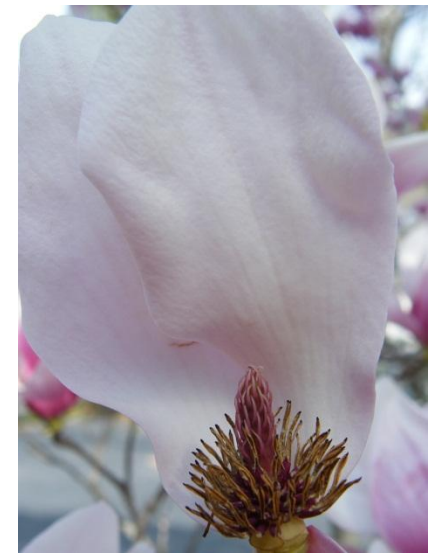


Saucer Magnolia – *Magnolia x soulangiana*

(Mag-no'-lee-ah x sue-lan'-jee-an'-ah)

Description

Saucer magnolias are deciduous small trees, 15' – 25'. They are one of the first to bloom in the spring – so early in fact that often their blooms are nipped by late frosts. The blooms are relatively large – small saucer-sized – which accounts for the common name. The outer side of the petals show a rich burgundy color before the buds open to reveal the whitish-pink interior.



Star Magnolia – *Magnolia stellata*

(mag-no'-lee-ah stel-a'-tah)

Description

Star magnolia is a small deciduous tree that blooms very early in the spring before its leaves unfold. The white, delicate, somewhat floppy-looking flowers are at the mercy of cold snaps, but its lovely spring show when nothing else has dared to bloom is worth the risk.



Bradford Pear – *Pyrus calleryana*

(Pie'-rus kal-er-ee-a'-nah)

Bradford pears are miracle trees that turned into monsters. Originally projected to be 'small trees', they have now grown to twice that size and are still growing. They are weak limbed because of faulty limb structure, and are now on many invasive plant lists.

Nevertheless, they are beautiful 'three season' trees – Spring bursts forth in a veritable cloud of white flowers that seem to smother the tree; summer shows a tree with beautiful, glossy green leaves; and fall sets the tree ablaze with foliage color that is second to none.



Weak branching structure

Pruning Generalizations

Volumes have been written on the art and science of pruning – and all those thousands upon thousands of printed pages must mean that the subject is complicated. Right? It can be. *Do I prune on old wood or new wood?* What does that mean? *Should I be concerned that my pruning clippers are transmitting viruses from one shrub to the next?* Maybe.

But for our purposes, I like to make it simple and generalize. Knowing the intricacies of pruning is fine for professionals and zealous do-it-yourselfers, but it is not the intent of this guide. The intent is to give general guidelines that de-mystify and simplify the process. Here are the basics:

Timing

Most any shrub can be pruned at any time, but for some shrubs pruning at a less than ideal time may result in loss of the next year's berries or blooms (but only that one year.) However, I like pruning in late winter because it takes advantage of rapid spring growth that follows allowing the plant to recover quicker.

Prune late winter/early spring

- Broadleaf shrubs such as aucuba, boxwood, sasanqua, camellia, hollies, illicium, leucothoe, viburnum, wax myrtle, as well as others.
- Deciduous flowering shrubs such as abelia, butterfly bush and others. This is a generalization that is not true across the board.
- Nandinas require a specialized routine of pruning. Each year in late winter or early spring, cut ½ to 1/3 of all canes in a clump to within 6” of the ground. Do not cut from the top. This allows new growth to fill in the lower part of the plant.
- This is the time to hard prune (cut back to 1’ from the ground) to rejuvenate old or weak shrubs.

Prune late spring/early summer after flowering

Azalea, forsythia, gardenia, loropetalum, pieris, rhododendron, weigela

Prune summer/early fall

Light trimming of fast growing species like hollies and wax myrtles are often necessary to keep plants looking tidy.

Don't prune much after August or new foliage that develops won't have time to harden off before winter.

Pruning Tips

Pruning Definition

In general, this guide recognizes four different ways to prune.

- Shearing
- Hand pruning
- Hard pruning
- No Pruning

Tips for Fearington maintenance

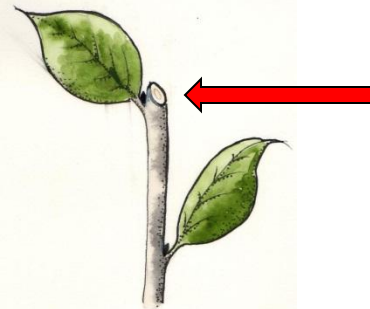
- Pruning and shearing should be done judiciously and only when a shrub threatens to outgrow its space, not just as a routine activity.
- Strive to maintain a natural appearance. No flat tops; keep a rounded shape.
- When shearing with gasoline clippers, do not cut into the body of the shrub (where woody branches are) unless it is too large. Instead, only take off fast growing shoots.
- When hand pruning, cut back to the nearest bud or stem with a slanting cut. Don't leave a stub.



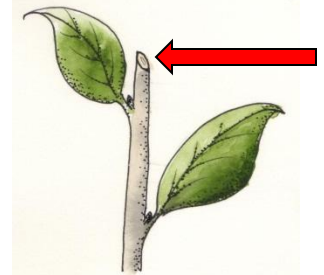
Keep natural shape.



Flat tops are too formal.



Cut back to nearest bud.



No stubs.

Types of pruning

1 - Hand pruning

Uses pruning loppers, hand clippers or hand saws to cut selective branches.



2 - Shearing

Uses gasoline clippers to strip away the outer layer of leaves and twigs.



3 - Hard pruning

Cuts a plant back severely.



4 - No pruning

Leave it alone.



Sometimes pruning can be stopped and the shrub will grow into a tree.



Nandina and mahonia maintenance



Unpruned Nandinas – leggy and unattractive



Proper pruning technique



The cuts force new growth at bottom.



Nandina when properly pruned.

Each year in late winter, 1/3 to 1/2 of all canes (stems) in each clump are cut back to 6". This forces new growth at the point of the cut. After three years, the plant will now have three layers of leaves - top, middle and bottom - which keeps it leafy and full. The entire clump is not cut down and it should never be cut from the top. Remember, a leggy, thin plant is an ugly, unhealthy plant. The same principles are true for Mahonias.



Flat tops mean Nandinas have been improperly pruned.



Mahonia

Holly Maintenance



Allow single 'Needlepoint' hollies to have a natural look.



Holly hedges may be sheared because of time constraints.



'Carissa' hollies rarely need pruning.



Yaupon hollies may be sheared to keep them from becoming too large.



These 'Compacta' hollies have been sheared too closely.



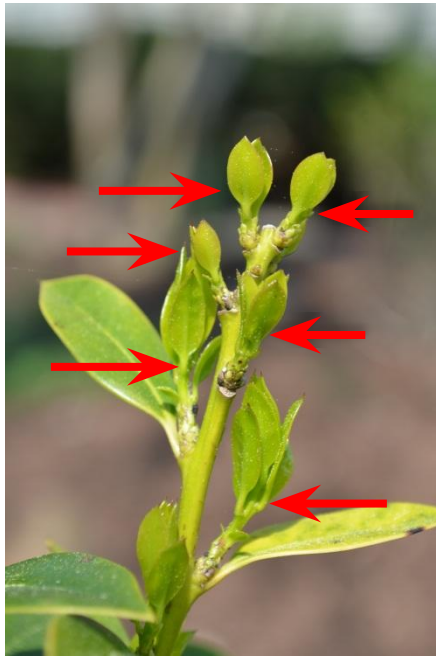
Let them leaf out a bit to assume a more natural form.



This 'Compacta' needs a light shearing.

Hedges and shrubs with flat tops that are closely sheared indicate a formal style of pruning. It is labor intensive since the plants must be repeatedly sheared to maintain the close-cropped appearance. This method is not in keeping with the more relaxed style of Countryhouse. Instead, the shrubs will be allowed to bush out slightly to present a more natural appearance.

Results of holly pruning



Cutting back a stem signals the plant to send out new growth. Where there was once one leaf, we now see many new leaves. Pruning takes advantage of this characteristic to make a shrub bushier.



Hollies have been hard pruned.



Same hollies two years later.



After 2 months



'Needlepoints' partially cut back. This method is only marginally successful. A better way is to rejuvenate through hard pruning.



Same needlepoints one year later. Results not satisfactory.

Hollies are fast growers and must be pruned regularly to keep them from becoming too large for home-side and hedge use. Shearing is the accepted method to keep them tidy, especially in hedges, but this type of pruning will eventually result in leaves growing only on the outside of the plant outline. Hard pruning will then be necessary to reduce the overall size and correct the effects of the repeated shearing. This severe pruning stimulates growth and will return the plant to a full and attractive shrub.

Wax myrtle Maintenance



Most of our wax myrtles have been repeatedly sheared until very few leaves remain. Once this happens, the only option is to hard prune them.



Hard pruned



New growth 3 months after hard pruning.



A healthy wax myrtle should be covered with leaves.

Wax myrtles are large, fast growing native shrubs that need to be pruned often to keep them in bounds in our small yards, otherwise, they can easily grow to 20' or better. Shearing is acceptable but its effects will have to be corrected periodically by hard pruning which forces the plant to flush out with new leaves and a natural form. The problem here is that we want a very large shrub to stay a small shrub, but the plant is programmed to grow large. The constant battle is an indication that someone has selected the wrong plant.



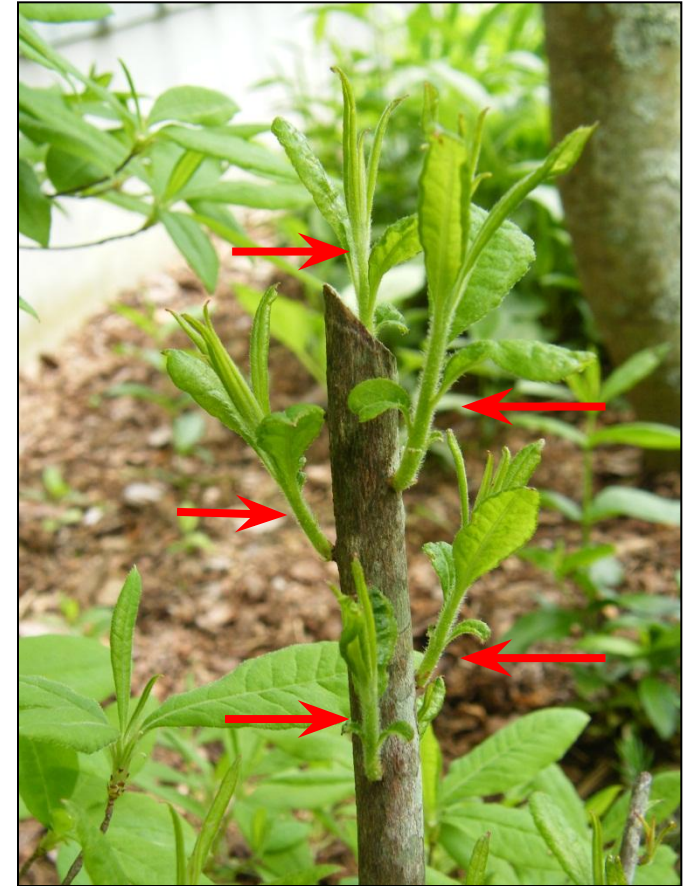
Azalea Maintenance



Overgrown, unhealthy



Improperly pruned – flat top



The results of pruning – lots of new leaves.



Hard pruned



Azaleas one year after hard pruning

Azaleas must be pruned by hand regularly to keep them full. Shearing results in leggy stems with leaves and flowers only at the top. Overgrown or mispruned azaleas will then need to be hard pruned to rejuvenate them and return them to attractive shrubs. It typically takes from one to two years for azaleas to complete the recovery. Very old ones may not respond satisfactorily. Here in Ferrington, deer make growing these lovely southern shrubs difficult to impossible.

Rhododendron Maintenance



Improperly pruned



Hand pruning



Hard pruned



15 months after hard pruning

Rhododendrons should be hand pruned regularly to keep them full and lush. Occasionally they must be hard pruned to keep them from becoming too large and to correct any previous pruning or growth errors. This severe pruning stimulates growth and will allow the plant to grow into a full and attractive shrub. They are slow growing and it will take 1 ½ years to recover.

Illicium, Leucothoe, Chindo Viburnum Maintenance



Illicium is an open, rangy shrub and needs regular pruning.



It can grow this much in one year.



Same plant pruned.



Same requirements for Leucothoe



Chindo viburnums send large shoots straight up each year which should be cut back to encourage bushiness.



Results of pruning cuts



Shearing destroys leaf shape and forces the shrub into an artificial form. Hand prune to keep its natural look. Chindos do not respond well to shearing.

Japanese Plum Yew Maintenance



Upright plum yew
Before pruning



After pruning



Prostrate plum yew
Before pruning

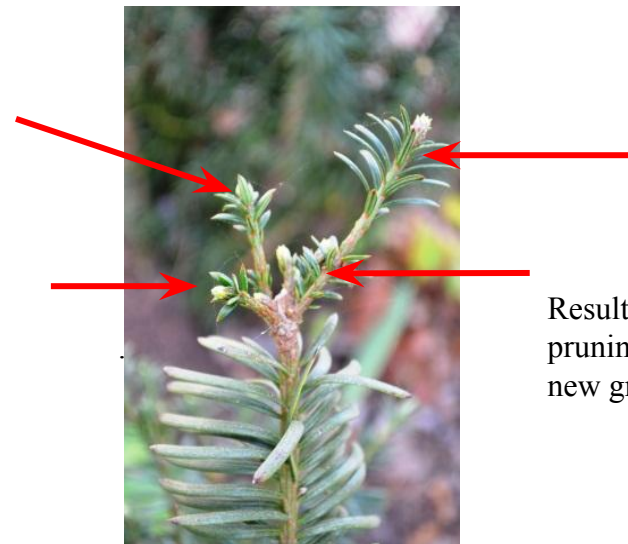


After pruning



Vase-shaped plum yew

After pruning



Results of pruning cuts, new growth

Japanese plum yews require minimal pruning. When one threatens to outgrow its boundary, however, hand pruning is a must. Never use shears. Cut back individual stems to desired length so the plant never has a 'pruned' look.

Spring blooming plants - Maintenance



Abelia



Forsythia



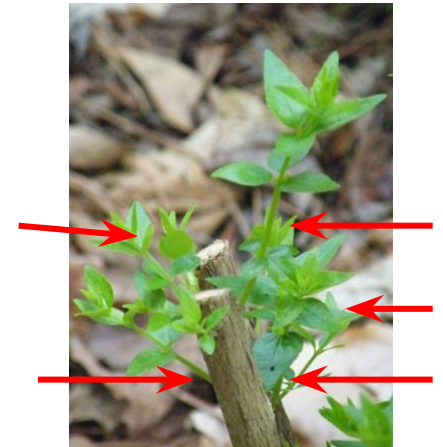
Loropetalum



Honeysuckle bush



Spirea



Results of the cut. New growth is forced.

Abelia, forsythia, loropetalum, bush honeysuckle, and spirea bloom in spring, mostly on long shoots. After flowers stop blooming, cut back the long shoots to form a compact, natural-looking shrub. I prefer hand pruning, but shearing is acceptable if there are too many to hand prune. All of these need to be hard pruned every few years.

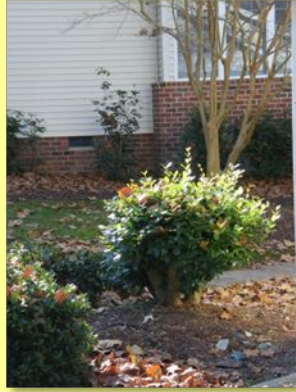
Pruning Recovery Rates



Ligustrum overgrown



Hard pruned



6 months later



Rhododendron



1 1/2 years later



Holly



9 months later



Sasanqua



8 months later



Azalea



1 year later



Wax myrtle



3 months later



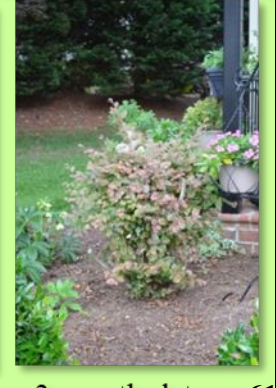
Nandina



5 months later



Loropetalum



3 months later

Shade Plants



Rhododendron



Leucothoe



Japanese plum yew



Otto Luyken laurel



Osmanthus



Goshiki osmanthus



Illicium



Mahonia



Camellia, sasanqua



Sweet box



Hellebores



Ferns



Sedges

Plants for partial shade



Most hollies



Nandina



Ligustrum



Wax myrtle



Chindo viburnum



Boxwood



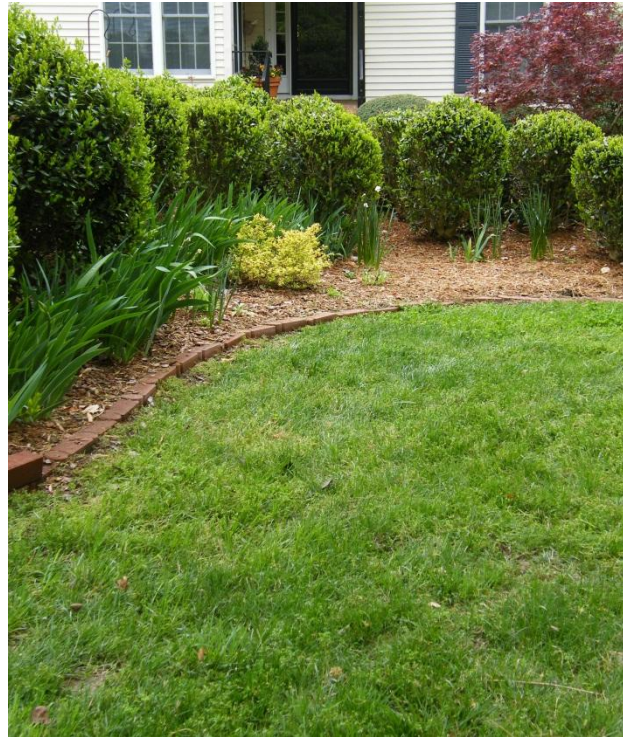
Daphne

Grass, lawns

Beautiful grass requires a great deal of attention to look good and stay healthy: water – an inch a week – not to mention fertilizer, weed control and various other amendments and services. Without irrigation, our Ferrington lawns will never look thick and unblemished. Increasing shade, compacted soil and tree roots also add to our lawn woes. Weeds take advantage of weak, thin areas and multiply.



Newly planted grass that required an inordinate amount of attention to look this good.



Spring grass that has received a reasonable amount of maintenance.



Winter doldrums



Same grass in April greening up

In shady areas moss can be a good thing

Ground covers - Grass substitutes



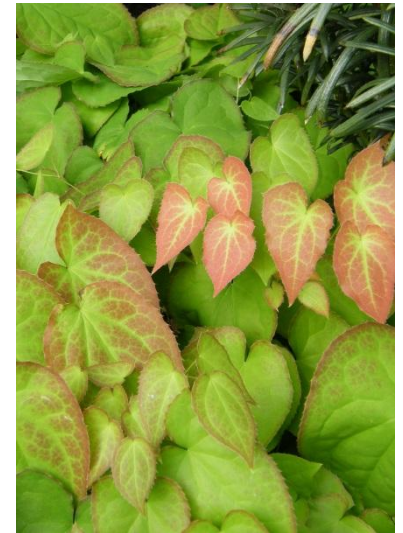
Mondo grass



Liriope



Sedge



Epimedium



Acorus



Ajuga



Ferns

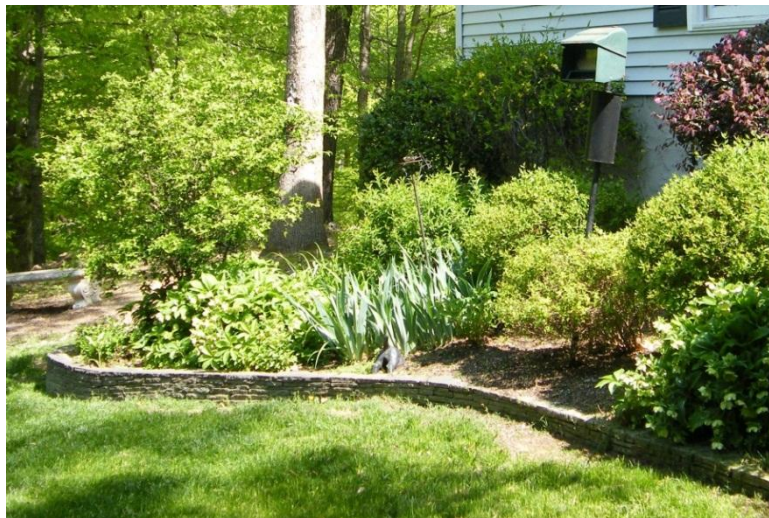


Moss

Edging



432



464



411



432



432



393



393



435

66

Retaining Walls



435



355



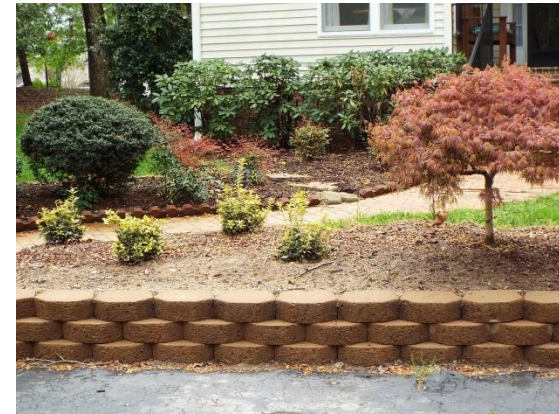
437



Camden



432



332



Pollinator
Garden

Stepping stones



432



429



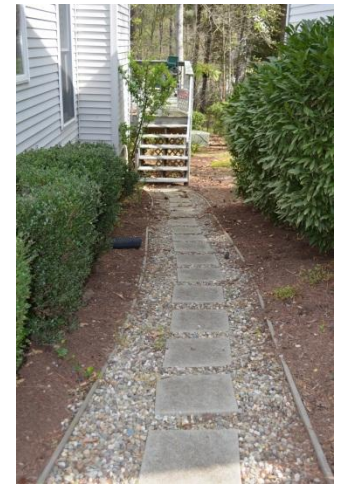
419



426



421



498

Before and After - 433



Before and After – 414



Before and After - 386 Common area



Before and After – Wintercrest East



Removed
Bradford
pear tree



Before



After

