

## **REPOTTING AND PRUNING**

### **Fact Sheet: Keeping up Appearances**

#### **REPOTTING**

When plants outgrow their containers and become root bound growth is stunted. Leaves are yellowing, drooping and dropping. Telltale signs are soil that dries out quickly, roots protruding from drainage holes and overflow remaining on topsoil after watering. Often a plant looks top-heavy or appears to be bursting out of its pot. They just don't look pretty anymore.

#### **Nature Makes the Rules**

Choose a container one size larger but growth potential and space availability are factors. If the plant is a type that will grow rapidly the new pot should be two or three sizes larger. Conversely, don't dwarf a small plant by placing it in a large planter. It won't look good or ever grow larger than nature intended.

#### **Move**

Water lightly to help the root ball and soil slide more easily out of the pot. Tap the rim of the pot firmly against a hard surface and carefully pull out intact plant and root system. Healthy roots should be white or light-colored. Roots packed tightly in a pot don't take up nutrients efficiently. Trim the roots and loosen up the root ball before replanting. Use a sharp knife or pruning shears for this job, removing as much as the bottom third of the root ball if necessary. Remove about one-third of the old potting mix from the root ball loosening it gently with fingers or a pencil. Prune as needed if relocating to a smaller pot.

#### **Relocating**

Pour in a layer of moistened soil before centering the plant in container. Add more potting mix tamping it firmly down around plant leaving some room on topsoil for absorbing water spillover. Water well and let drain. Try to keep any newly repotted plant out of full sunlight for a week or so.

#### **GROOMING AND PRUNING**

Deadheading and Pruning encourage growth and flowering keeping shrubs and climbers thriving for a long time.

#### **Deadheading**

Pinching off fading or dead flowers keep plants at their best. Getting rid of plant debris leaves more room for the new growth. Pinching prevents waste of energies and untimely seeding in order that buds and blooms regenerate quickly during the growing season.

## **Pruning**

Many shrubs and climbers need occasional pruning for maintenance and endurance. Cut away dead and overhanging branches to stimulate new growth. Growing patterns can be controlled with judicious pruning. Cut back leggy plants if they are outliers in a display. Cut back or *unbraid* to control rambunctious vines such as morning glory that entangle and twine around neighboring plants. Reduce height for a bushier growing pattern. Pruning keeps plants shapely and encourages flowering plants to bloom. More intensive pruning is needed when moving plants from a larger to smaller container.

## **Know-How**

Timing varies. Prune perennials before winterizing or bringing inside for shelter. Others should be groomed during growing season after flowering. But if branches sag and leaves yellow and fall, immediate action is needed. .

Vines need a bush mass to thrive. Cut back in Spring to activate buds lower down to sprout. Roses should be cut back to about one half of the bush size. Remove crossing canes, twiggy growth and dead wood.

## **Cuts**

Heading is cutting back a portion of the branch above a healthy bud or side branch. The heading cut is placed to encourage new side growth and prevent the main stem from growing longer. The cut should be about one-fourth inch above a bud facing the direction in which you wish new growth to occur. The new sprout shoots out from below the cut. Thinning cuts remove an entire limb or branch at its base where crowding occurs

*Contact Botanical Gardens or Horticultural Society for additional information on pruning.*

## **Gardening Information and Updates**

[www.parkwestcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.parkwestcommunitynetwork.org)

August 9, 2016