

## Planting a Prune-less Garden

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Common causes of a prune-a-lot garden:

- Dense planting for instant gratification
- Impulse nursery purchases...*I'll find a spot somewhere...*
- Believing that *I can always prune to keep it small.*
- Planting too close to the edges

Pruning cannot compensate for poor landscape design.

Poor pruning can ruin good landscape design and increase pruning demands.

What are you feeding it?!

- Most woody plants perform best at modest nutrient and moisture regimes.
- Excess moisture and nutrients push excess growth that pushes pruning demands.

Be selective on including plant types and training systems that come with intensive pruning demands:

- Sheared hedges, topiary, espalier, coppiced shrubs
- Woody vines, especially wisteria and hardy kiwi!
- Hybrid and floribunda roses
- Sub-shrubs like Russian sage, lavender, and santolina.

Nursery tags- read the fine print and between the lines.

What's the size potential *after* 10 years?

Some useful resources to research tree and shrub sizes and growth habits:

- Oregon State Landscape Plants <https://landscapeplants.oregonstate.edu/>
- WSU PNW Plants <http://www.pnwplants.wsu.edu/>
- Great Plant Picks <https://www.greatplantpicks.org/>

If a shrub must be pruned more than once every 3 to 5 years to control size, it's too large for the site.

Right plant, right place! Don't jam a square peg in a round hole. Choose naturally narrow plants for hedges and screens. Place compact shrubs for foundation plantings under windows and other small-scale beds. Expect that your plants may grow wider than you think.

Location, location, location

- Pay attention to edges! Use generous setbacks for shrubs and trees.
- Optimize spacing between trees and shrubs to accommodate their future spread
- Fill the gaps with robust herbaceous companion plants that thrive with similar culture and can serve as succession plants that may recede as the planting matures.

