



Pruning

Description of activity	PAL
Removing Dead, Diseased and Damaged parts of plants and shaping	Planned, Exploratory
Time of Year	Time needed to complete activity
All year	Ongoing, it can be dipped in and out of for short and long periods

Preparation

1. Assess the weather, this activity is purely outdoors and is more suited to fine weather.
2. Have a walk around the garden to make a quick visual assessment of where needs attention most.

Tools and materials

1. Secateurs
2. Shears
3. Garden bag



What to do

1. For shaping - Identify plants that have finished flowering.
2. Using sharp shears or secateurs, cut back to desired shape, take off little of the new growth, being careful not to cut into older wood.
3. For pruning - Look for Dead, Diseased and Damaged stems, leaves and flowers, using secateurs, cut back to healthy growth, a leaf bud.
4. Dispose of prunings in municipal waste or compost bin (cut up into 6 inch pieces).



Gardens are always changing, and we should embrace growth of plants as a healthy sign. A well-designed garden will have the ultimate height of the plant in mind. However sometimes we want to keep a plant flowering low down so want to keep it smaller, or maybe its obstructing the pathway, so just needs a few stems taking off. Or perhaps pruning promotes a particular type of growth which we want, for example the new stems of *Cornus alba*, we need to prune hard every three years to keep it putting out that lovely new growth.

If in doubt about whether to prune or not to prune, just leave it till next time, and always prune after flowering.

Depending on the garden, you may be looking to a little pruning or a lot, if the latter is the case, consider splitting the task over a few days to offer the opportunity to participate to more people. Repeating the task may help people to engage the memories of the last experience and build up a confident relationship with the garden space.

Extras

Support people to really look at the plants, at the segments on the stems that might tell us how much it has grown that year. Look for buds that will become flowers and try to recall what colour the flower is and whether it smells. How has the plant changed since last time, does it look well? These are conversations that can happen at any point whilst moving around the garden space.

Adaptations and variations

This task is suitable for people able/willing to move around the garden. Depending on people's physical needs, choose plants at the front of the bed so accessible from the path, or some plants further back in the bed for those able to squeeze in between.

There are multiple elements to this task, and individuals can be supported in one or more of these elements. For example, if putting the prunings in the garden bag is enough, or carrying a tool, or deciding which plant and where to prune is enough, one to one support can facilitate the elements of this task.

Weather contingency

Pruning is a far nicer in fine weather but if someone would like to go out in poor conditions then don a set of waterproofs and enjoy!