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Tips for Spring Tree Pruning



It's hard to believe that the winter season is nearly over. Yes. The first official day of spring is March 20, and that means [tree pruning](#) season is nearly here, too.

As for evergreen trees:

--Spruces, firs and douglas-firs don't grow continuously, but can be pruned any time because they have lateral (side) buds that will sprout if the terminal (tip) buds are removed. It's probably best to prune them in late winter, before growth begins. Some spring pruning, however, is not harmful.

--Pines only put on a single flush of tip growth each spring and then stop growing. Prune before these "candles" of new needles become mature. Pines do not have lateral buds, so removing terminal buds will take away new growing points for that branch. Eventually, this will leave dead stubs.

--Pines seldom need pruning, but if you want to promote more dense growth, remove up to two-thirds of the length of newly expanded candles. Don't prune further back than the current year's growth.

--Arborvitae, junipers, yews, and hemlocks grow continuously throughout the growing season. They can be pruned any time through the middle of summer. Even though these plants will tolerate heavy shearing, their natural form is usually most desirable, so prune only to correct growth defects.

In addition to pruning at the right time and the right way, one of the most important aspects of pruning is using the right tools. If you're not using a professional, make sure you are using the [5 Must-Have Pruning Tools](#)

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