

Course Description

Pruning is a foundational horticultural skill that supports healthy growth, attractive form, and long-term plant resilience. This course introduces structural pruning techniques for specimen shrubs, small ornamental trees, and young trees, emphasizing the principles that guide effective pruning decisions and strong branch structure.

The course will provide you with the reasoning, assessment skills, and terminology needed to approach pruning thoughtfully. You will explore safe tool use, plant evaluation, and sustainable practices that promote long-term plant health, setting a foundation for applying these skills under guidance in real-world settings.

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain the purpose and benefits of structural pruning for trees and shrubs.
2. Assess a plant visually to determine which branches may be removed and why, including dead, damaged, or crossing limbs.
3. Identify appropriate timing for pruning to support plant health, flowering, and long-term structure.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of safe and effective pruning techniques that maintain natural plant form and strong branch structure.
5. Select, use, and maintain appropriate pruning tools safely, including personal protective equipment (PPE).
6. Apply principles of post-pruning care to support plant establishment and long-term health.
7. Recognize common pruning mistakes and understand strategies to avoid them.
8. Make informed pruning decisions that account for plant type, site conditions, and sustainability considerations.
9. Communicate pruning principles and reasoning clearly to colleagues, volunteers, or team members, reinforcing the role of mentorship and professional judgment.