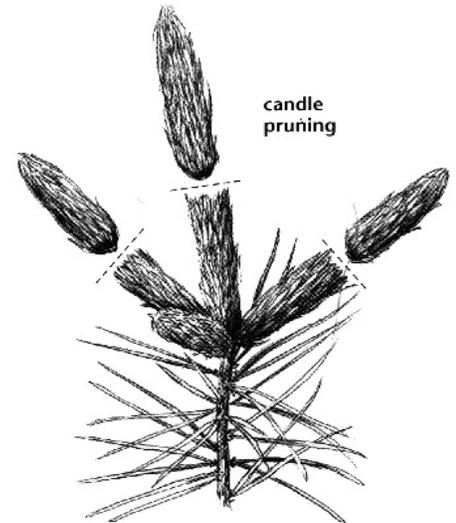


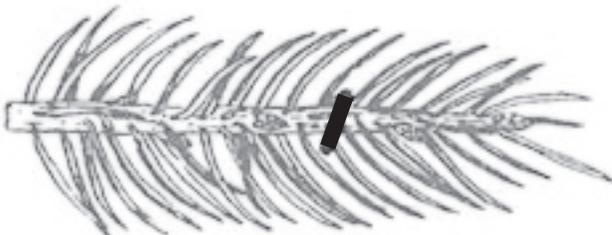
# Pruning Conifers

Unlike deciduous trees, evergreens do not readily produce new shoots on old wood and when they do, they grow very slowly. This means that pruning should be limited to new wood, and should not be too heavy. If you cut into an older stem on pines, spruces, cedars and firs, no new growth will sprout from below the cut. You can, however, remove dead or diseased branches at any time.

**Pines:** Pines generally need little or no pruning. On young plants, if you would like a more compact plant, “pinching” may be helpful. Using the fingers, snap off one-third of the new growing tips or “candles” in the spring when young needles are in a tight cluster. Pines produce few side buds so they are not tolerant of more extensive pruning. If the end bud on a branch is removed, growth on that shoot is stopped. Do not shear pines.



**Spruces, Cedars, and Firs:** Cuts may be made at any point along the younger portions of the branches. Control size by pruning back to a bud. The best time to prune spruces and firs is in the early spring. Pruning is necessary to maintain the natural shape of the plants.



*Prune spruce to a side bud or side branch to encourage growth*

**Juniper, Cypress, False Cypress, and Arborvitae:** These species can withstand relatively heavy pruning and many may be trained into various forms by shearing. If you shear one of these plants, do so carefully while it is actively growing in the spring. Early spring pruning is best, but additional light pruning later in the season may be necessary. Avoid cutting back to bare branches - they seldom are able to develop new growth.



*Pruning junipers and arborvitae back to a side shoot hides the pruning cut*

**Yew and Hemlock:** It is preferable to allow these plants to retain their natural form, but both respond well to heavy pruning and shearing. Yews are able to withstand exceptionally severe pruning into the older wood. Early spring is the best time for pruning, although occasional light pruning later may be necessary.

Whenever possible, avoid pruning evergreen trees in late summer and early fall. Pruning at this time can stimulate new growth that may not harden off before winter, and thus may be damaged or killed by the cold.

