Your guide to proper tree pruning

Trees may require pruning for a variety reasons. Storms may have damaged branches, necessitating a pruning. In other instances, trees may have outgrown their yards, overpowering the landscape.

Autumn and winter, when trees largely go dormant and fallen leaves make it easier to see the branches beneath, may be prime times to prune. Pruning during the dormant period also minimizes sap loss and stress to the tree,

insects are less likely to be or injury. problematic during the colder months of the year.

are smaller and more mana guided hand to ensure the

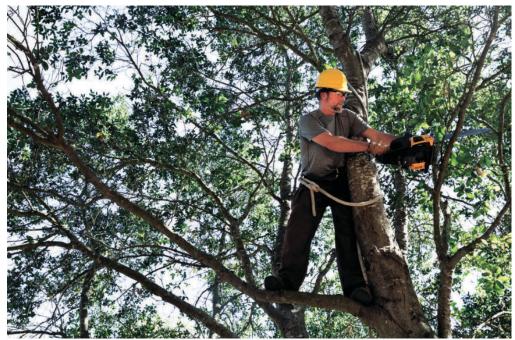
and can help cut down on the branches fall in a safe manner growth of fungi. In addition, so they do not cause damage

Branches also need to be trimmed properly to facilitate Trimming and pruning good healing. Trees will form can be handled by do-it- a callus bark covering over yourselfers if the branches cuts to keep out disease and decay, much as a scab forms ageable. Practice on thinner over a person's wound. Dambranches before moving on aging the bark on a tree while to thicker ones, which may pruning may interfere with require extra help. Branches that process, so do-it-yourmay be heavy, and it takes selfers need to take the time to prune correctly.

According to Danny Lipford, home improvement expert and host of the radio program "Today's Homeowner," larger limbs may require three cuts instead of one. The first cut is a small notch in the bottom of the limb, around two to three feet from the trunk and about one-quarter of the way through. This helps prevent the bark from splitting. A relief cut is then made a few inches away from the notch cut, and goes all the way through. This removes the weight of the branch so that the final cut can be made without the branch splitting and falling. The final cut is made right where the limb extrudes from the branch collar, or the swollen bump that then forms into the tree limb. Follow the slant of the branch collar when making the cut. Smaller or thinner branches may not require the same three steps, but every effort should be made to reduce injury to the tree.

When deciding how much to prune, less is usually more. All pruning can put some

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level of stress on the tree and increase its vulnerability to disease and insect infestation. A good rule of thumb is to never prune more than 25 percent of the crown. According to experts at TreeHelp. com, living branches should comprise at least two-thirds the height of the tree. In some instances, the rules may need

to be bent if trees are interfering with utility lines or to meet community laws. However, always prune minimally to avoid damaging the tree.

The right tools also make the job safer and easier. Use a pole pruner and lopper, rope saws, folding pruner, and a bucksaw. A chainsaw can be used in some instances, es-

pecially when pruning larger limbs. Always disinfect pruning tools after you're done to prevent the spread of disease to other trees.

Consider hiring a professional tree service if pruning proves beyond your capabilities. Doing so is safe and often well worth the investment. FH168295

Essentials for a DIY spa bathroom



Plenty of natural light and luxurious amenities can contribute to a relaxing spa experience at home.

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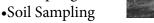


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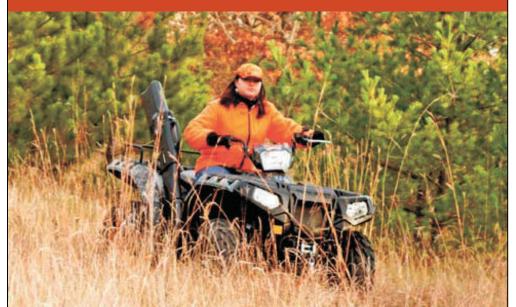


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may be a luxury reserved for Pair with scented bath bombs celebrities and socialites. For or salts for a true spa experimany people, a day spa is a ence. treat enjoyed on special occasions or while on vacation. showers are self-enclosed However, home bathrooms units that feature generators can be designed to provide that deliver steam through the same types of amenities offered at day spas right in the comfort of one's home.

logical Association says that ing to the retailer Modern money, work and the future Bathroom®, modern steam of the country are particularly strong stressors today. Eighty percent of workers feel stress on the job and learning how to manage stress is a top concern, according to the American Institute of Stress. Creating a Zen-like retreat at home can help alleviate stress and improve health.

Homeowners whose renovation plans include turning a floors provide the utmost in bathroom into a spa oasis will comfort when stepping out of need to choose which features the bath or shower. They can they desire most. These suggestions can spur on more ing the space more comfortideas to create the ideal retreat.

• Soaker bathtub: There's something to be said about a luxurious soak in a tub. Tubs come in different sizes and shapes, like the highly recognizable clawfoot tub and other freestanding units. These types of tubs, as well as corner tubs, can offer deepseated luxury by way of a re-

• Steam shower: Steam steam heads. The steam fills the space and can help a person unwind before a refresh-The American Psycho- ing shower or bath. Accordshowers come with digital controls, which makes it easy for users to activate the shower, adjust the length of time that the shower will operate and adjust temperature controls. Extra features like music, mood lighting and aromatherapy can be included as well.

· Heated floors: Heated warm the room and make us-

 Vessel sinks: A vessel sink typically features a bowl or basin that looks like it was placed on top of the vanity. Vessel sinks can elevate the ambiance in spa bathrooms.

• Plush towels and robes: In addition to fixtures and other functional components of the bath, linens are key. Soft-spun Egyptian or Turkish cotton towels and robes are a must-have luxury for the full spa experience.

• Comfortable seat: A bench or chair nestled by a bathroom window is the perfect spot for pedicures or catching up on some light reading.

• Natural light: Skylights or privacy-ensuring windows are a must to create a relaxing space close to nature.

A spa bathroom at home is within reach. With a few touches, any bathroom can be transformed into a luxurious oasis. FH188188



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