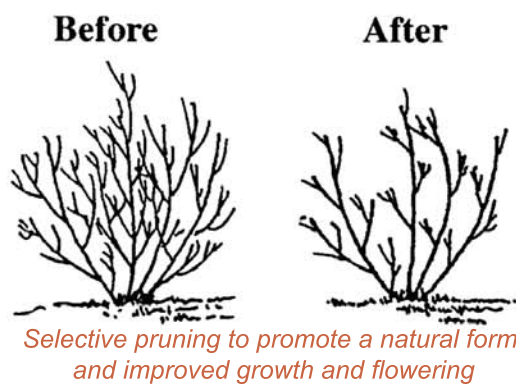


Pruning Texas Rangers - By Stan Southwick



Texas Rangers are one of the most common shrubs in Southern Nevada. It is a tough evergreen shrub for our desert climate providing summer flower color. It comes in a variety of sizes, leaf colors and flower colors. Its popularity has placed it at the head of the list of “Top Ten Poorly Maintained Plants”. If left to grow, it forms a natural looking shrub with profuse flower displays throughout the summer as the humidity and temperature conditions change.

However, there are not many that have been left to grow naturally. They seem to be the targets of the “Edward Scissor Hands Syndrome” and are turned into balls, squares, or my favorite (not)... the flat-topped cylinder. Shearing causes decline in the health of the plant, removes flower buds, increases labor costs, and increases landfill waste. Not to mention, it looks awful!



Correctly pruned.

The good news is if your Texas Rangers have been abused or have outgrown their space, they can be saved. Texas Rangers, along with several other shrubs, have buds up and down the entire branch. This makes it possible to re-leaf from a short branch stub. Late April into early May is the best time to cut the main branches of your abused Texas Rangers back to about 10” off the ground removing all the leaves and small branches. Your Texas Ranger will quickly start growing into a nicely formed natural bush and flower profusely this summer. This shouldn't be done every year, but it will hit the “Restart Button” on an abused Texas Ranger. If you want to maintain your Texas Rangers at a particular height you can prune long branches back to a crotch deep inside the shrub. This will reduce the height by only leaving the shorter branches while also thinning the plant. This thinning allows sunlight to reach more of the plant promoting fuller healthier growth, which also correlates to more blooms!



Incorrectly pruned.

Happy pruning... and throw away your hedge shears!

“Happiness equals reality minus expectations.”
 — Tom Magliozzi

Favorite Flora:

Artemisia ludoviciana- Prairie Sagebrush- By Jon Marenfeld



Who knew that a plant that can grow in the upper Midwest, Southeast, and Pacific Northwest can also thrive here in southern Nevada. This month's favorite flora is that plant. Found from Canada to Mexico, *Artemisia ludoviciana*, commonly known as Prairie Sagebrush, is a species of sagebrush that's native to North America. The fast-growing Prairie Sage has fragrant, silver foliage, inconspicuous yellow flowers in spring, and behaves like a tall groundcover. In sunny spots it tends to have strong upright form, while in shade it's more relaxed. Mature plants can reach up to 3 feet high and wide. The stems are covered in wooly gray or white hairs which help defend the plant from our intense sun.

Like most native plants *Artemisia ludoviciana* requires a minimal amount of care. Plant this shrub in a location that allows it to spread freely since it tends to crowd out other plants. It should be planted in full sun to part shade and only pruned to control size and shape. Because it's aggressive and rhizomatous it might not be suitable for small landscape areas. Prairie Sage is a great drought tolerant choice that requires little water and is a great understory plant for native trees or as a companion to native woody shrubs and grasses.

Photo of the Month



Rocky Mountain National Park, CO
 Justin Van Cleef