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O. B. Howell discusses garden pruning

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For the information of all amateur gardeners, there are only eight excuses for picking up your pruning tools. If none of the eight can be justified, "just oil the clippers and saws and put them back, a pleasant day and an urge to cut something is not a sufficient reason for pruning," according to O. B. Howell, assistant professor of forestry at Montana State University and landscape architect.

Howell's wisdom on the subject of pruning was all laid out in apple pie order this week in a new booklet called "Pruning Without Pain", issued by Montana State University Press. According to Montana gardening authorities, author Howell has jammed more common sense into the one small volume than has ever been written before.

Howell says that the eight reasons for taking up sharp instruments for frontal attack on the shrubbery are as follows: to preserve the natural character of the plant, to take out injured or diseased branches, to encourage the production of flowers and fruit, to restore old plants to health, to obtain a particular shape or height, to encourage production of large flowers and fruits, to balance tops and roots, and to prevent damage to life and property. He has illustrated the book very liberally with drawings that show precisely how and what to cut. In addition, the University Press has inserted cartoons by Bill Iusler that are drawn in sympathy with the home gardener and his problems.

(more)
Howell is one of the best known landscape and gardening authorities in the Northwest. His professional career started with a period of service as a tree expert. This was followed by a bachelor of science degree from Michigan State University in landscape architecture and a master of science degree from the same institution in ornamental plant pathology.

He served for a time as a landscape engineer for the P.W.A., as rehabilitation supervisor for Ingham County, Michigan, professor of horticulture at Texas Technological College, city forester for Amarillo, Texas. In the Northwest, he was assistant professor of horticulture and landscape architecture at Washington State College for three years, gardening editor for the Spokesman-Review, and radio and TV commentator on gardening matters. He joined the Montana State University faculty in 1955 on the forestry school staff to teach landscape architecture and related subjects.

Howell organized and was district director of the Washington State Federated Garden Clubs, he is an international judge in horticulture and an international judge for the American Rose Society. An extensive contributor on gardening subjects to national magazines, he is also the recent winner of the Horticultural Achievement Award for the state of Montana. "Pruning Without Pain" is his second published book.