

## Pruning Redbud Trees

Q: First, my two Red Bud trees need pruning very much as there is a lot of dead branches and limbs that fall out during the year. I wasn't able to prune them this past fall. Is it ok to prune them back in the spring and how much back should I prune them? They are several years old. Secondly, is it normal for red buds to grow leaning? Thanks.

A: According the University of Tennessee Extension publication 1619: <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/PB1619.pdf>, you can prune them in the spring, after they flower, for better flowering the next spring. If you are shaping or sizing the tree, it is best to prune while the tree is dormant (see table 2, page 7, in linked publication). Redbuds are spring flowering trees, so you have a few weeks left to prune before they start leafing out. As for how much to prune, the publication above gives you some guidelines on where and how to cut for shaping your redbud tree. This publication has pruning methods for popular shrubs and plants as well.

For pruning any tree, important tips to remember are to use sharp pruners and to cut in the correct place. Cutting too close to the trunk can damage your tree. Always cut outside of the bark ring next to the trunk.

There are a couple of factors that may have caused your (or any tree) to lean: one side of a split trunk may have been cut off in the past allowing the other trunk to follow its own path without growing vertically; or an adjacent tree limb may have pushed the limb into that growth pattern. Depending on the angle, this tree may break in the future.

We hope this was helpful and we appreciate you submitting the question.

Come see us at the Farm Show today and tomorrow, February 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, at the Bristol Motor Speedway to ask us your gardening questions in person and check out vendors, farm supply and equipment, and connect with other folks who enjoy regional farming and gardening.

Tennessee Tree Day (March 20<sup>th</sup>) is coming! Order a tree or two and practice your newly acquired tree planting skills. Get more information at <https://www.tectn.org/tennesseetreeday.html>. There you can order trees and pick them up at a local UT-TSU Extension office or other sponsored locations near you. This is a great way to plant native trees and help Tennessee become greener.

Don't forget about Arbor Day! This day is observed by encouraging individuals and groups to plant trees. This year, Tennessee observes Arbor Day on March 5<sup>th</sup>, North Carolina observes on March 18<sup>th</sup>, Virginia and national Arbor Day observances are on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Arbor Day dates vary depending on climate and suitable planting season but is always observed in spring.