

## Clean & Sharpen your Hand Pruners

You'll be amazed at the difference it makes (Please: Be careful of your fingers!)  
Steven Nikkila & Janet Macunovich [www.GardenAtoZ.com](http://www.GardenAtoZ.com)

### What you need

Lubricating oil: WD-40 is good, Scotch-brite pad or steel wool, Rag, Small screwdriver (sometimes), Pocket honing stone, Honing oil, Elbow grease, (Bandages? Be careful!)

AND....

your pruners

### Simple steps:

Clean the blade, Clean the spring/mechanism, Sharpen the outer edge of the blade

First **clean the metal parts**. Oil will help. Coat the metal with WD-40  
Now use the Scotch-brite pad or steel wool to clean the metal surfaces

This is where the elbow grease comes in to play.

Work at it! Add more oil as needed. It's hardened sap and rust you're removing that build-up causes friction (harder for you to cut!) and keeps the blades from meeting (tears the branches).

Sometimes we resort to turpentine.  
Clean all surfaces. You CAN get it off.

You do NOT want to sharpen a dirty, rusty edge because dirt will scratch the blade. Meanwhile, tiny bits of rust will be dragged out and pressed into the new edge, "seeding" more rust

Phew! That's the *inside* edge of the blade cleaned.  
Now flip the pruners to clean the *outside* edge.  
Same procedure: Oil and scour.



Wow! Hard to believe they ARE the same pruners you started with!

The oil is softening all that crud but it may still be tough to clean it out of all the crevices. A screwdriver tip may help, to press the scouring pad into tight places.

Another spot to clean before we sharpen the blade: **Clean the spring area.**

Same deal: Oil, scrub, wipe.

Ugh, what a lot of gunk, all of it creating drag -- wear and tear on YOUR muscles.

Normally, it isn't necessary to disassemble pruners. But if they're very bad.....!

If you take them apart, re-set the tension when you put them back together.

This step differs for each pruner model.

Now wipe them off and you're **ready to sharpen!**

Stop looking at the *inside* surface of the blade.  
*Don't ever sharpen the inside of the blade.*  
Doing that would remove metal there, creating a gap between the cutting blade and the jaw.

You want a clean cut.  
Blades that don't meet mangle rather than cut. A bad cut (above) will take longer to close over and be prone to fungal and insect trouble.



Sharpen only the beveled edge  
It's the *outer surface* of the blade.  
When this blade was dirty its beveled edge was quite visible

It has lots of nicks and dull spots. When you sharpen, you smooth those out.  
That will mean less friction for less work and a better cut.

Put some honing oil on your stone  
The oil soaks in. Tiny bits of metal that come off as you hone will float away in an oil film.  
Now stroke the honing stone firmly along the beveled edge. Stroke in one direction, from base to tip.  
We aim for 50 strokes, then check it: If the pruners cut paper, OK!

Finally, hone to remove any burrs on the jaw. Burrs there could scratch the cutting blade (we mean the opposing, non-cutting half of the scissor)

Hone only the top, don't take metal off that inside part where the blade closes past the jaw.

Now admire your work!

And be careful of your fingers:  
Those cutters will work so *easily now!*

You did it!  
Clean & Sharpen your Hand Pruners  
GardenAtoZ.com  
© 2012 Janet Macunovich & Steven Nikkila

