26 IN THE GARDEN The Park Press | JULY 2011

in the garden by Stephen and Kristin Pategas



Pruning - Take Control

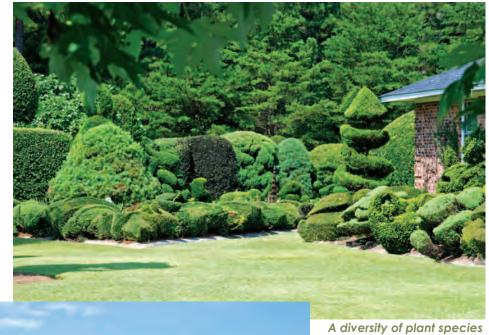
Pruning can be a very satisfying activity. Notice we didn't say task. For us it's a therapy session in the garden.

STEPHEN & KRISTIN PATEGAS

When pruning – you are in control. Not like dealing with pets, kids, significant others, or clue-

less sales help. Plants take whatever you dish out and don't talk back or leave something on your rug. Pruning, however, comes with responsibility. Although you can easily bend (prune) plants to your will, you need to think about the long term results. Feed the dog at the table once and...

For inspiration on pruning and taking responsibility we visited Pearl Fryar's Topiary Garden www.fryarstopiaries.com in Bishopville, SC (seven hours north of Orlando on I95). Pearl has single handedly mastered the art of topiary and created a delightfully whimsical garden that rivals and



Pearl's arches soar and inspire

All photography by Stephen G. Pategas /Hortus Oasis

at Pearl Fryar's garden



Topiary is the art of trimming the leaves and branches of live plants into shapes that may be fanciful or geometric. Many residential gardens have evergreen shrubs trimmed into whimsical shapes that range from columns and cones to small meatball-like spheres. Frequent pruning removes new growth as the plant either maintains or achieves its planned shape.

While you may not wish to have topiary in your garden you can use good pruning practices to maintain healthy and attractive plants.

- Plants with small leaves take frequent tight shearing better than those with large leaves which become misshapen and disease-prone.
- To keep a hedge in a healthy pyramidal shape so the light strikes the lower branches, lean into it as you prune so the top stays narrower than the base
- Prune just above a bud or branch so a stub is not left behind.
- Prune plants such as azaleas that flower on new wood soon after they blossom so new flower buds aren't trimmed away.
- To get blooms, do not shear flowering plants such as loropetalum/ fringe flower, camellias, and azaleas.

Pearl's handiwork was recorded in the readily available from Netflix documentary "A Man Named Pearl." His other passion is helping uninspired or average students who may not have done well in high school. He raises funds for scholarships funneled to those who have not reached their full potential and inspires them with his life story. As the twig is bent....perhaps it can even head off to college. \blacksquare

