

Sharpening Pruners

1. Start with a good cleaning

If the cutting surface is grimy, it will pass roughly over the hook and not cut cleanly, even if the blade is sharp.

- **Clean**

With a scouring pad and a little warm, soapy water, scrub off all the sap, dried plant bits, and other gunk, and wipe the blades dry.

- **Remove rust**

Use the coarse steel wool to remove rust and any tough matter that remains (see photo). Then move on to the finer steel wool to restore the sheen of the metal.



2. Stabilize pruners

Open the pruners wide with the beveled edge of the cutting blade facing you. For added safety, secure the pruners in a bench vise. Protect your hands and eyes by wearing gloves and goggles.



3. Sharpen pruners

Position a medium (or coarse, if the shears are badly dulled) diamond hand file against the blade at the same angle as the bevel. With one smooth stroke, draw the file along the contour of the blade and toward its tip. Use moderate pressure and keep the file at the same angle throughout the stroke. Always file away from your body.

Continue until a sharp edge forms—typically 10 to 20 strokes, depending on the condition of the blade. Whether working on bypass or anvil-style pruners or loppers, sharpen only the beveled cutting blade. Finish with a few strokes of a fine file to



refine the edge.



Turn the pruners over and slide the fine file over the flat side of the blade several times to remove any burrs.



14. Maintaining an Edge

Wipe linseed oil over the sharpened blade to condition the metal and prevent rust. Use a soft cloth coated in oil to thoroughly clean the pruners after each use.



Source: Willi Evans Galloway, *Organic Gardening Magazine*, <http://organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/sharpening-pruners>