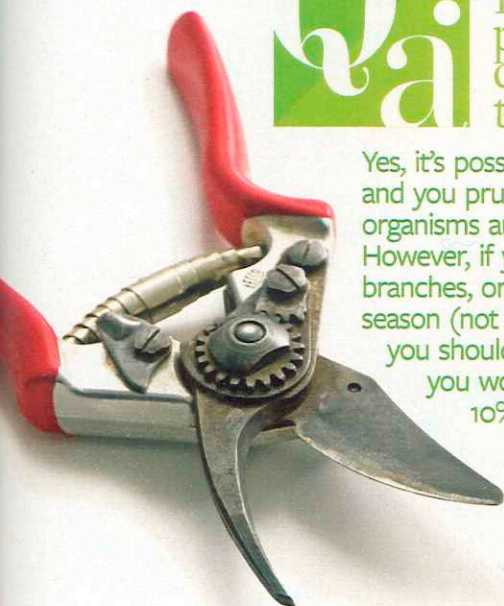




I've heard that pruners can spread diseases from tree to tree. Is that true?



Yes, it's possible. If your trees appear healthy and you prune in winter when disease organisms are dormant, the risk is minimal. However, if you are cutting diseased or dead branches, or pruning during the growing season (not ideal but sometimes necessary) you should disinfect shears and saws as you work. To do this, dip shears in a 10% bleach solution after each cut.

Do you have a gardening question? Get answers from BHG experts as well as other gardeners at BHG.com/gardendoctor.

garden smarts

"When you till your garden soil this spring, soil should be just slightly moist. Cultivating wet soil can result in flowerbeds full of rock-hard clods."

Eric Liskey, deputy editor, gardens and outdoor living



ETERNAL FLAME

Nonstop Fire begonia is a terrific plant for small containers. Give it a sheltered part- to full-shade location and watch as the fiery flowers light up the shadows. Nonstop begonias are hardy in Zones 9-10; use as annuals in other Zones. To locate a retailer, go to provenwinners.com. 