

Florists should clean pruning shears after use, disinfect the blades when needed, and sharpen them as soon as cuts become ragged or require extra pressure. A little care protects the tool and makes the work of cutting stems feel more precise.

Clean away sap and debris

Start by opening the shears and brushing away loose leaves and stem pieces. Wipe the blades with a damp cloth to remove sap and dirt. For stubborn residue, use warm water and a little dish soap, taking care around the sharp edges.

Use a small brush to reach the pivot and the space between the blades. Do not soak the shears, since water can linger around the joint and encourage rust. Rinse off any soap with a damp cloth, then dry the tool thoroughly.

Clean blades are easier to inspect. Look for nicks, rust, loose screws, or damage before moving on to sharpening. A badly damaged blade may need professional attention or replacement rather than a few passes with a stone.

Disinfect the blades

Cleaning removes visible residue, while disinfecting helps reduce the risk of transferring plant pathogens between cuts. Disinfect after cutting diseased material and before moving to healthy plants. Clean off sap and dirt first, since debris can interfere with the disinfectant.

Use a disinfectant suitable for pruning tools and follow its label for contact time and safe use. Alcohol at 70 percent concentration is one option. Apply it to the cutting surfaces, taking care not to touch the edges, and allow the blades to dry.

Keep the work area ventilated and store alcohol away from flames. Some disinfectants can corrode metal, so follow the product instructions and dry the shears before putting them away.

Sharpen the cutting edge

Secure the shears on a stable surface, or hold them firmly with the cutting edge facing away from you. Wear protective gloves and use a sharpening stone or file intended for blades. You do not need to remove much metal to restore an edge.

- Find the existing bevel, the angled surface along the cutting edge.
- Move the stone or file along that bevel, following its original angle.
- Use light, even strokes and check the edge as you work.
- Remove any small burr from the opposite side with a light pass, keeping that surface flat.

On bypass shears, sharpen the beveled cutting blade rather than reshaping the flat face that passes the other blade. Anvil shears can have a different edge, so follow the manufacturer's instructions for the tool. Avoid grinding aggressively, which can change the blade's shape.

Finish and store

Wipe away metal dust, then put a small drop of tool oil on the pivot and a thin film on the blades. Open and close the shears to work the oil into the joint. Wipe away excess oil and check that the blades move freely.

Test the shears on a spare stem. A clean cut and comfortable movement are signs that the tool is ready to return to the worktable. Store it closed and dry, where the edge will not knock against other tools.

Good shears become familiar in the hand. Taking a few minutes to care for them keeps that familiar movement steady through a long day of arranging.

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