

# GARDEN TOOL SHARPENING

Before sharpening, check the pivot nut. It could be loose, making the blades drift apart while cutting. This will tear the twig instead of cutting it cleanly. The nut should be snug with no play in the pivot.

With the nut tightened, check the tool; if it cuts cleanly, it doesn't need sharpening. If it still cuts poorly, look down each blade to make sure it's not bent.

If a blade is slightly bent, loosen the pivot nut and separate the blades. To straighten the blade, put it in a vise, slip on some thick leather gloves and tweak it until it's straight.

Hedge shears are perhaps the most abused garden tools. Because of their huge blades, it's tempting to use them as pruning shears. They're designed for cutting green wood only, no thicker than 3/8 in. Cutting thick branches or dried wood can stress the pivot nut and even bend the blades slightly.

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