



### Become a Member and Receive:

- 20% discount on programs
- Early registration for summer camps
- Invitations to members-only events
- Facility rentals for your celebrations
- 10% discount in the Nature Shop
- Discounted/free admission to select nature centers across the nation
- And more!



## Newsletter and Calendar

[www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org)

215-887-6603

January – April 2026

### Nature Center Hours

#### Business Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

#### Dede Long Nature Museum:

Open Daily: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

#### Griscom Bird Observatory:

Open Daily: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

#### Pond:

Open Daily: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

#### Trails:

Open Daily: Dawn to Dusk

#### Pollinator Garden:

Open Daily: Dawn to Dusk

#### Butterfly House:

Open Seasonally: May-June

Facility and trail access may change due to weather or scheduled programs/events.  
Please call ahead for current hours.

**Admission:** Donations Accepted  
*Admission fees are subject to change.*

### Calendar of Events begins on page 4.

*The Dede Long Nature Museum,  
Griscom Bird Observatory,  
and pond will be CLOSED on  
New Year's Day and Easter Sunday.  
Trails will be OPEN dawn to dusk.*

[www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org)

### Pruning 101: For Happy and Healthy Trees

By: Carter Johnson, Senior Naturalist

Pruning can help your woody plants survive adverse experiences or create a more beautiful shape that fits your property's space better. To prune successfully, you must look carefully and cut thoughtfully. Below you will find instructions on how and when to prune your woody plants in order to have a healthy plant that will continue to survive and thrive for many years to come.

#### Getting Started

Before any pruning can be done, make sure you have these tools:

1. Safety glasses and gloves - As always, while working with tools in the outdoors, gloves and safety glasses are highly recommended to reduce the risk of injury.
2. Pruning shears - Shears are an easy way to make cuts on small branches that are about 1/4 inch thick.
3. Small hand saw or long-handled loppers - Anything thicker than 1/4 inch thick requires a saw or long-handled loppers.

*Using the wrong tool, dull edges, or dirty blades can all result in the spread of disease or unnecessary damage to your plants.*

#### When to Prune

To know when to prune a plant, you should know when it flowers. If your tree or shrub blooms in the early spring, wait until after it is done flowering to prune, as the spring flowers will bloom on the growth from the previous year. Pruning too early results in fewer flowers and slower growth for that plant. (Continued on Page 2)



215-887-6603

# Briar Bush News and Information

If your tree or shrub is a summer bloomer, prune in mid to late March before the buds break. This allows your plant to focus on creating new growth in your desired areas and prevents it from wasting its energy.

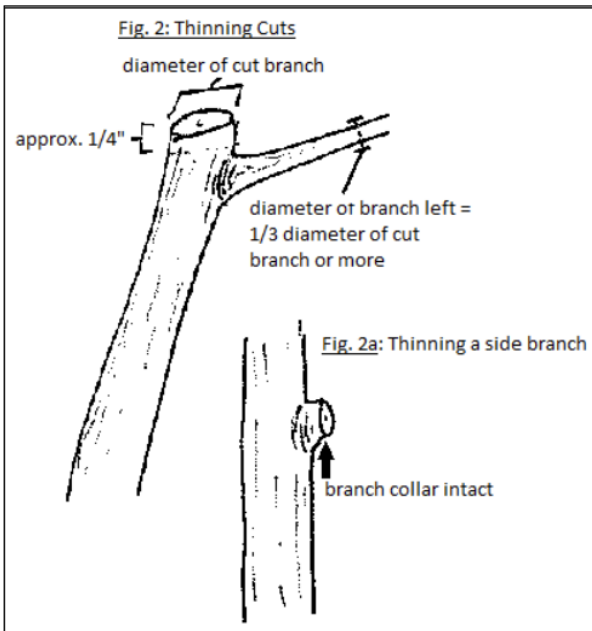
*Anything that is dead, damaged, or diseased should be pruned immediately, no matter the season.*

## What to Prune: Remember the Three D's and Two C's

**Dead, Damaged, Diseased** - Prune anything that looks blackened, cracked, shriveled, etc. Not sure if it's alive? Check the buds and bark: they may be shrunken, dry, or shriveled, and compare questionable parts with healthy parts. If you're still unsure, take a sharp knife and scrape away a tiny slice of bark from the branch. Any moist, green tissue means it's alive.

**Crossing, Crowded** - Prune branches that are crossing back through the center of the shrub or tree that are (or could be) rubbing against each other. Rubbing branches will damage each other. Use a reduction cut (remember, heading will cause more growth). Keep the branch that looks less likely to cause future problems and that you can bring back to a properly sized branch for reduction.

## How to Cut: Heading vs. Thinning



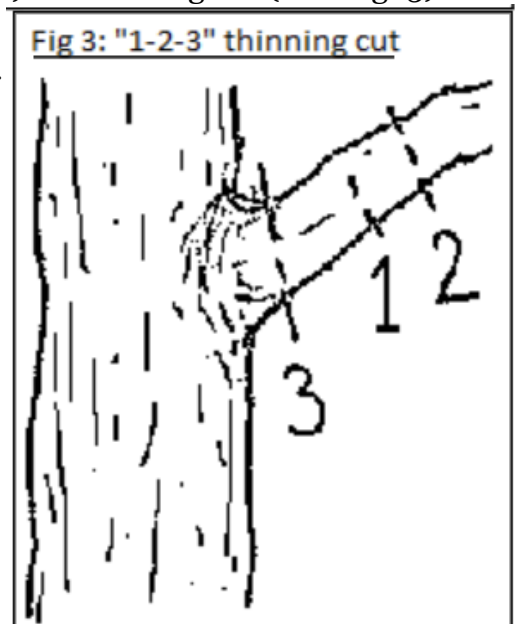
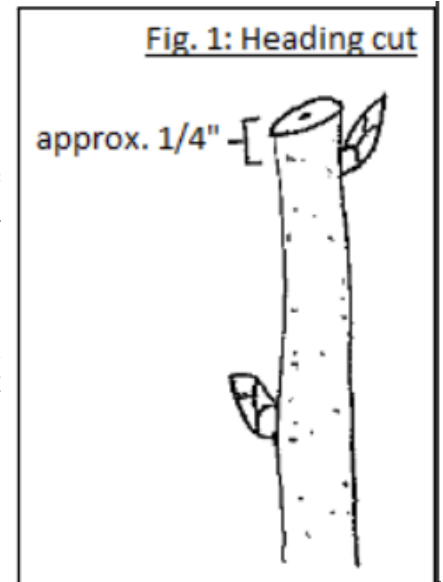
A **heading** cut (Fig. 1) is one made in the middle of a branch or twig, back to a bud, at 30° from straight across. This causes increased growth at the “head” of the cut. A common pruning mistake is trying to control the size of shrubs by making lots of cuts in the middle twigs as this causes a flush of growth right where you cut.

A **thinning** (or reduction) cut (Fig. 2) removes a twig or branch all the way back to another one. Always cut back to a branch with at least 1/3 the diameter of the one you're cutting (bigger is better). Note in Fig. 2a (and Fig. 3) that the cut is right after the branch collar, or swelling at the base of the old branch. The branch collar should always be left intact; cut too close and the plant will not heal, too

far out and the stump will rot back into the plant.

**Heavy Stuff**- On any branch that would be hard to hold easily in one hand, use the “1-2-3” cut (Fig. 3), partway up from the bottom. This will keep the bark you're keeping from ripping down from the cut.

By following this simple guide, you will be able to care for your woody plants and keep them happy and healthy for many years to come.



# Briar Bush News and Information

## Welcome New Board Member



### Carrie B. Barron



Carrie joined the Center for Forensic Science Research & Education (CFSRE) after more than twenty years in the non-profit field, initially serving as Director of Operations before transitioning to Director of STEM & Workforce Development in January 2024. A lifelong lover of science and nature, she began her career as a seasonal Park Ranger and later moved into education roles with the National Aquarium in Baltimore and the Philadelphia Zoo, managing public and school-based programming grounded in conservation and scientific inquiry.

For twelve years, Carrie served as Director of Communications for Audubon Pennsylvania and Center Manager at the John James Audubon Center, where she advanced organizational growth and developed innovative STEM initiatives. She created an award-winning schoolyard native-gardens program featured nationally by Audubon, wrote the prologue for the revised Audubon Birdhouse Book, and contributed regularly to Audubon Adventures.

In her free time, Carrie coordinates the community garden at her residential complex and teaches nature-inspired craft classes with her son, Parker.

## Feather Our Nest 2025 The Magic of Nature



On Friday, September 26, 2025, Friends of Briar Bush hosted our annual **Feather Our Nest Gala and Auction: The Magic of Nature** at North Hills Country Club where guests enjoyed a memorable evening of dinner and drinks, engaging games, a live auction, and special entertainment by **Danny Archer from House of Magic**.

On behalf of the Friends of Briar Bush and the Special Events Committee, **thank you to our amazing community** for helping make Feather Our Nest 2025 a truly meaningful evening. With your generosity, we **surpassed our fundraising goal and raised over \$73,000!** These funds will nurture Briar Bush Nature Center as a place where visitors of all ages can experience the wonder of nature—learning, exploring, and growing alongside it for generations to come.

**A heartfelt thank you to all our FON 2025 Sponsors** for helping make the evening a success! View the full list of sponsors and photos from the event here: [FON 2025 Event](#).

**Special appreciation** goes to our Friends of Briar Bush Board Members for their dedication to Feather Our Nest and commitment to our mission. They support us as we change and grow throughout the years.





# Programs for Children

Most programs require registration for participants ages 2+. Children under 2 years of age are free of charge.

Please review all program information at the time of registration.

To register, visit [www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org). Questions or need help registering? Call 215-887-6603.

## Magic Mornings

**For 2-5-year-olds with Adult**

Hey, toddlers! Bring your favorite adult to Briar Bush for walks, animal encounters, activities, and more! Each week features a new nature-themed lesson which repeats throughout the week. (Register for one day per week.)

**Day:** Most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays  
(Visit our website for the full schedule.)

**Time:** 10:30am - 11:30am

**Cost:** \$12.50 | Abington Resident: \$11.25 | Briar Bush Member: \$10.00

**Add'l. Child** (Same Household): \$7.50 | Abington Resident: \$6.75 | Briar Bush Member: \$6.00



## Nature Pioneers

**For 4-6-year-olds**

Children are invited to join us on their own for age-appropriate activities, walks, animal encounters, crafts, games, and more! Each week features a new nature-themed lesson.

**Day:** Most Thursdays  
(Visit our website for the full schedule.)

**Time:** 1:00pm-2:30pm

**Cost:** \$15.00 | Abington Resident: \$13.50 | Briar Bush Member: \$12.00



## School's Out, Get Outside!

**For Children in Grades K-5**

When school is not in session, students can spend a day with Briar Bush exploring the outdoors, meeting animals, making crafts, playing in nature, and more.

**Day:** Select Holidays and In-Service Days  
(Visit our website for the full schedule.)

**Time:**

- Half-Day Session: 1:00pm-3:30pm
- Full-Day Session: 8:30am-3:30pm
- After-Care Session: 3:30pm-5:30pm

**Cost:**

- Half-Day Session: \$30.00 | Abington Resident: \$27.00 | Briar Bush Member: \$24.00
- Full-Day Session: \$75.00 | Abington Resident: \$67.50 | Briar Bush Member: \$60.00
- After-Care Session: \$12.00



# Programs for All Ages

Most programs require registration for participants ages 2+. Children under 2 years of age are free of charge.

Please review all program information at the time of registration.

To register, visit [www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org). Questions or need help registering? Call 215-887-6603.

## WinterFest - Trees in Winter

Celebrate the magic of the winter season at our annual WinterFest! Enjoy a variety of activities including guided hikes, animal encounters, games, crafts, and more. No registration required—just dress for the weather and join the fun!

**Date:** Sunday, January 25, 2026

**Time:** 1:00pm-4:00pm

**Cost:** FREE



## Members-Only: Love Bugs - Campfire Program

Fall in love with the marvelous mini-beasts all around us! Learn what makes bugs so important through activities, live insect observation, and plenty of creepy-crawly excitement. Then, enjoy s'mores around the campfire. *Campfire is weather dependent.*

**Date:** Friday, February 6, 2026

**Time:** 7:00pm-8:00pm

**Cost:** FREE for Briar Bush Members (Registration is required.)



## Family Nature Night - Spring to Life

Bring the whole family for a fun night complete with live animal encounters and interactive stations relating to the theme of the night - all at your own pace. Family Nature Nights are geared toward children with sensory processing disorders and feature a forest sensory experience! *Light snacks will be provided.*

**Date:** Friday, March 13, 2026

**Time:** 6:00pm-7:30pm

**Cost:** FREE



*Sponsored by: BLBB Charitable*

## EarthFest - Biodiversity: The Spice of Life

Celebrate the Earth at our annual Earth celebration! Enjoy a variety of activities including guided hikes, animal encounters, games, crafts, and more. *No registration required.*

**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2026

**Time:** 1:00pm-4:00pm

**Cost:** FREE



**The DuPey Team**  
PILLAR TO POST  
HOME INSPECTORS

*Sponsored by: The DuPey Team, Pillar to Post*



# Programs for Adults

*Most programs require registration.*

*Please review all program information at the time of registration.*

*To register, visit [www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org). Questions or need help registering? Call 215-887-6603.*

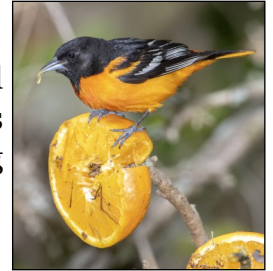
## Breakfast with the Birds

Start your morning off right with breakfast and birdwatching! Join us at the Bird Observatory to learn the basics of birdwatching, explore bird biofacts and apps such as Merlin and eBird, and observe songbirds at the feeders, all while enjoying bagels, fruit, and coffee.

**Date:** Saturday, January 10, 2026

**Time:** 9:00am-10:30am

**Cost per Participant:** \$15.00 | Abington Resident: \$13.50 | Briar Bush Member: \$12.00



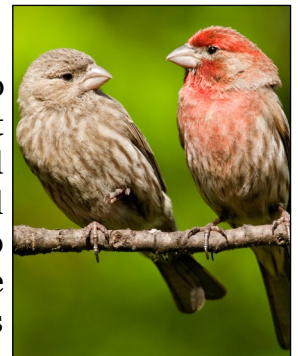
## Amorous Animals

It's Valentine's Day, and love is in the air—for animals, too. Bring a date, a group of single friends, or go stag for an explicit and hilarious evening! Start the night off by tantalizing your taste buds with decadent desserts. Then, Educator and Animal Curator Katie Fisk will regale you with the bizarre behaviors and natural histories of amorous animals. We'll talk bizarre endowments, courtship methods (how do porcupines mate?), and yes, we'll find out who really is the biggest in the animal kingdom (hint: it's not you). You'll meet some live animals up close and personal as well! (This is a BYOB event for ages 21+.)

**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026

**Time:** 7:00pm-8:00pm

**Cost per Participant:** \$15.00 | Abington Resident: \$13.50 | Briar Bush Member: \$12.00



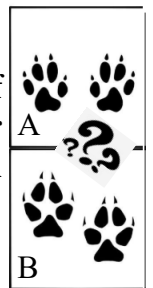
## Nature Trivia Night

Are you ready to put your nature knowledge to the test? Join us for a fun-filled evening of nature trivia, socializing, and friendly competition. No need to be an expert - just gather your friends, test your knowledge, and compete for the top spot - and the 1st place cash prize! (This is a BYOB event for ages 21+.)

**Date:** Saturday, March 27, 2026

**Time:** 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Cost per Participant:** \$15.00 | Abington Resident: \$13.50 | Briar Bush Member: \$12.00



## Birds and Blooms

It's springtime and the Briar Bush forest is changing every day! The first native flowers of the season are blooming and migratory birds are arriving from their winter homes. Year-round bird residents are also joining in the morning chorus as they prepare for a busy breeding season. Come and celebrate the sights and sounds of spring on a walk as you learn about the avian and botanical residents of our forest!

**Date:** Saturday, April 11, 2026

**Time:** 9:00am-10:00am

**Cost:** \$12.50 | Abington Resident: \$11.25 | Briar Bush Member: \$10.00



# Summer Camp 2026

Registration is required for Summer Camp Programs. To register, visit [www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org).  
Please review all program information at the time of registration. Questions or request a Summer Camp Guide?  
Contact Melissa Eldridge, Director of Programs, at [melissa@briarbush.org](mailto:melissa@briarbush.org) or call (215) 887-6603.



## Play! Learn! Discover!

Summer is a time when learning and play go hand-in-hand. Briar Bush Summer Camps give your child the opportunity to experience the wonders of nature through scientific discovery, interpretive hikes, animal encounters, games, crafts, nature play, and more!

### **Seedlings Half-Day Camps for Ages 4-6**

*AM & PM session options each week!*

### **Saplings Full-Day Camps for Ages 6-7**

*All day fun at Briar Bush!*

### **Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 8-9**

*Regional field trips each week!*

### **Full-Day Travel Camps for Ages 10-12**

*Regional field trips each week!*

### **Overnight Camp for Ages 13-15**

*Tent camping at **Hickory Run State Park!***

### **Summer Camp Aide Program for Ages 13+**

*Have fun while building leadership skills and earning service hours!*



Scan the QR Code to view our complete **Summer Camp Guide** including:

- \* 2026 Camp Schedule and Weekly Themes for ALL Age Groups
- \* Summer Camp Financial Aid Information
- \* General Summer Camp FAQs and Registration Tips





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## Get Involved - Volunteer with Briar Bush!

Briar Bush simply couldn't achieve its goals without the support of dedicated volunteers. Explore the many ways to get involved and make your mark at BBNC!

**Board of Director:** The Friends of Briar Bush is seeking Board of Director candidates with backgrounds in community leadership, business, finance, non-profit management, and education.

**Community Engagement:** Briar Bush attends and hosts many events throughout the year, and volunteers play a key role in their success. This opportunity involves representing Briar Bush, sharing information about our organization and programs, and engaging visitors with artifacts and nature-based activities.



**Facilities and Grounds:** Do you like to work with your hands and be outside? Do you have a special skill that you would like to share? Or are you part of a group that would like to spend a day giving back to nature? Briar Bush is seeking volunteers to help with a variety of Building and Grounds projects!

***Interested in a BBNC volunteer opportunity?***  
***Email [volunteer@briarbush.org](mailto:volunteer@briarbush.org)***  
***or scan the code for more information.***

