

5) Arborize.

On special occasions a "too-big" rhody can be thinned-up and turned into a nice small tree. The plant in question should be very big and old. It should have a thick, curvaceous trunk. Be sure to meticulously deadwood it as well, and perhaps generally thin the upper canopy to prevent the 'lollypop' look.

There is an art to arborizing.



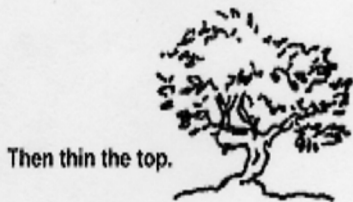
No lollipops.

6) Radical renovation.

In especially desperate and hopeless situations, it is sometimes appropriate to cut the entire plant nearly to the ground and start it over. Like surgery, it is a serious move and you should exhaust other possible solutions first. Sometimes the plant dies. Most often it does not.



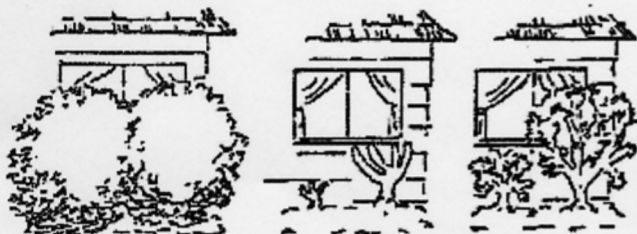
Remove lower branches



Then thin the top.

7) Adjust your attitude.

Most often the only thing a rhododendron is too big for is somebody's idea of how big it should get to be. In this case, the cheapest and best solution is to learn to appreciate "mature" plants. A mature rhododendron can grow to be ten to twenty feet - that's two stories high. And some get up to forty feet. Get used to it.



Radical renovation. Prune very low (left shrubs). Right side shrub is pruned too high and obscures the window again very soon.



Remove limbs touching the ground and deadwood



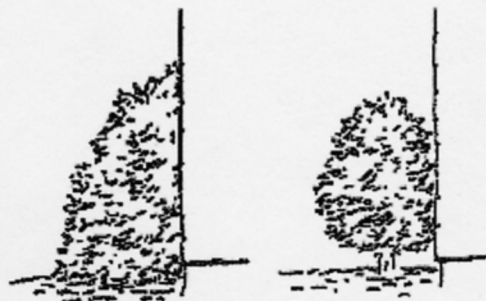
After



If desired, prune a small amount to even out the crown.



After



Pruning the back side of a rhody can make it fit better and feel smaller.