

When to Prune Ornamentals

WINTER: *after hard freezes: plants truly dormant*

- * thin crowns of mature trees; remove dead or storm damaged limbs.
- * clip hedges to retain clean lines.
- * in late winter rejuvenate shrubs that are out-of-bounds.

EARLY SPRING: *just before bud break*

- * best time to prune roses and summer-flowering shrubs: rose-of-Sharon, glossy abelia, *Buddleia* (butterfly bush), *Cornus* (dog-wood species with brightly colored stems), *Hypericum* (St. John's wort), privet, *Potentilla* (cinquefoil), *Sorbaria* (false spirea), *Spiraea bumalda*, *S. billiardii*, and *Symphoricarpos* (snowberry).
- * head back growth of random-branched conifer species: junipers, *Chamaecyparis* (false cypress), yews and arborvitae.
- * train young shade trees planted the previous year by selecting scaffold branches, removing others.
- * preferred time to rejuvenate evergreen and deciduous shrubs and hedges that are out of bounds.
- * best time to annually prune most vines.
- * alternate time to thin mature trees.
- * avoid pruning species prone to bleeding (maples, birches and yellowwood).

SPRING: *bud break*

- * best not to prune any woody plants at this time due to translocation of carbohydrates and growth hormones to growing points.

SPRING/EARLY SUMMER: *leaves fully expanded*

- * rub off trunk buds that will give rise to suckers and water sprouts.
- * prune spring-flowering shrubs soon after blooming period: azaleas, *Deutzia*, pearl bush, *Forsythia*, *Kerria*, *Kolkwitzia*, (beauty bush), ninebark, *Philadelphus* (mock orange), *Rhododendron*,

Spiraea arguta (bridal-wreath spirea). *S. thunbergii*, *S. vanhouttei*, and *Weigela*.

- * for more compact growth, pinch out one-half of the new growth of pines, spruces, and firs.
- * clip back the terminals of vigorous new shoots as well as spent flowers in ericaceous species (*Rhododendron*, azaleas, mountain laurel, andromeda): this will keep plants compact and encourage production of side shoots and flower buds.
- * evergreen shrubs or hedges that were pruned heavily in late winter or early spring can be trimmed now to re-establish clean lines.

SUMMER: *new shoots reach full growth and start to become woody.*

- * preferred time to perform major thinning operations on crab apples, callery pear, ornamental cherries and plums, honey locust, spruce, willow, and poplars to reduce susceptibility to trunk cankers.
- * rework the interiors of tree-form dogwoods to remove overly shaded, crisscrossed, or weak branches.
- * alternate time to rejuvenate hedges.

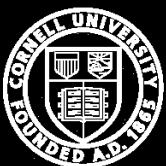
EARLY FALL: *new shoots fully mature; early stages of fall color*

- * heavy pruning at this time can result in stimulation of new shoots that may not properly harden before winter; limit pruning to the removal of damaged or dead wood, especially on conifers.
- * wisteria may be pruned at this time.

LATE FALL: *after several hard frosts*

- * clip away excess ivy growth on building walls and around windows: English ivy, Boston ivy and Virginia creeper.
- * alternate time to perform major pruning of noncanker-prone species.

APPROPRIATE TIMES TO PRUNE WOODY ORNAMENTALS



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Orange County

Agriculture
Family & Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development

Garden Helpline: 845-343-0664
18 Seward Ave, Ste. 300
Middletown, NY 10940-1919
845-344-1234
Mon.-Fri., 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
www.cce.cornell.edu/orange

Cornell University Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities.

Alder: late winter, spring, summer
Apple: late winter, early summer
Arborvitae: late winter, spring, early summer
Azalea: late spring
Beech: late winter, spring, early summer
Birch: late spring, early summer
Catalpa: late spring, early summer
Cedrus: late winter, spring, summer
Cephaloraxus: late winter, spring, summer
Chamaecyparis: late winter, spring, summer
Cherry: late winter, early summer
Chestnut: late winter, spring, early summer
Chokeberry: late spring, summer
Cotoneaster: spring
Cryptomeria: late winter, spring
Cytisus: late spring, early summer
Dogwood: late spring
Elm: late winter, spring, early summer
Fir: late winter, spring, early summer
Forsythia: late spring, early summer
Heather: early summer
Hackberry: late winter, spring, early summer
Hawthorn: late winter, spring, early summer
Hickory: late winter, spring, early summer
Holly: late winter, spring, early summer

Honeylocust: late winter, spring, early summer
Honeysuckle: late winter, spring, summer
Juniper: late winter, spring, early summer
Katsura tree: late winter, spring, early summer
Laurel: early spring
Lilac: late spring, early summer
Magnolia: late spring, early summer
Maple: late spring, early summer
Mountain ash: late spring, early summer
Peach: late winter, early summer
Pine: Middle to late spring
Poplar: late winter, spring, summer
Privet: late winter, spring, summer
Pyracantha: late winter, early spring
Quince: late spring, early summer
Rhododendron: late spring, early summer
Rose: late winter, early spring
Shadblow: late spring
Spirea: late spring, early summer
Viburnum: late spring, early summer
Witch Hazel: late spring
Willow: late winter, spring, early summer
Wisteria: late spring, early summer
Yew: late winter, spring, early summer
Zelkova: spring, early summer