

[Molzon's Pruning Guide](#)

PRUNING AND CARE OF WOODY SHRUBS THROUGH THE SEASONS

Now hear this. Pruning and cutting cause more problems than they fix.

One thing we forget is that, in nature, plants manage to survive without our infinite wisdom and assistance. Fact is we're really not that important! Much of the maintenance we do on plants is therefore to please ourselves more than the plants. What I'm saying is that if you're unsure of what to do, do nothing, for plants can take care of themselves. They might not be the epitome of tidiness, but they'll survive. Following are some recommendations that fulfill the desires to tidy up and / or perhaps increase blooming, hopefully without affecting the plants in a negative way.

Some plants really need nothing done to them, winter or summer, or both. If you wish to tidy them up in the winter by removing any rogue branches, feel free to do so, but take heed that some spring bloomers hold their buds on the growth they make during the late summer and fall; if you cut that off, you may also be removing potential flowers.

Abelia (Glossy Abelia)

Prune anytime January to May, otherwise best if left untouched

Aronia (Chokeberry)

Best if not pruned

Azalea (Evergreen Azalea)

Prune within 30 days after flowering, and do not fertilize after June

Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)

Light summer pruning and nutrition extends bloom into fall. Prune anytime during fall/winter

Buxus (Boxwood)

Best if left untouched during the growing season, otherwise prune anytime Feb through May

Callicarpa (Beautyberry)

Do not prune during the spring/summer because it will remove flowers and (potential) berries. During the winter cut back to 18-24"

Camellia (Fall & Spring Blooming Camellia)

Prune within 30 days after flowering, otherwise best if not pruned

Caryopteris (False Spirea)

Best if left untouched during the growing season. Cut back to 12" during late winter

Cedrus (Cedar)

Prune late winter. Avoid cutting the central leader

Cercis chinensis (Chinese Redbud)

Do not require trimming, but if you must prune anytime June through July

Chamaecyparis (Cypress)

Prune anytime Feb through May. Wind protection will benefit winter color

Clethra (Summersweet)

Prune late winter if needed, but most are fine if kept natural

Cornus *alba* (Red Twig Dogwood)

Prune late winter

Cotoneaster (Pseudo Quince)

Little to no pruning needed

Cryptomeria (Japanese Cedar)

Prune anytime Feb through May. Wind protection will benefit winter color

Cupressocyparis (Leyland Cypress)

Prune anytime Feb through June

Cupressus (Arizona Cypress)

Prune anytime Feb through June

Cytisus (Scotch Broom)

Lop the main central stalks to 1-2' withing 30 days after flowering

Deutzia

Prune 30 days after flowering

Euonymus *alatus* (Burning Bush)

Prune anytime during late winter

Euonymus *fortunei* (Burning Bush)

Prune anytime Feb through July

Forsythia (Spring Glory)

Prune within 30 days after flowering

Fothergilla

Best if not pruned

Hibiscus *syriacus* (Woody Hibis./Rose of Sharon)

Prune anytime Jan through April

Hydrangea *arborescens* (Caphead Hydrangea)

Prune during late winter

Hydrangea *macrophylla* (Mophead Hydrangea)

Best if not pruned, but if you must, prune no later than mid summer

Hydrangea *serrata*

Best if not pruned, but if you must, prune no later than mid summer

Hydrangea *quercifolia* (Oakleaf Hydrangea)

Best if not pruned, but if you must, prune no later than mid summer

Hypericum (St. John's Wort)

Prune hard in late winter

***Ilex crenata* (Japanese Holly)**

Prune during late winter

***Ilex glabra* (Inkberry Holly)**

Prune during late winter

***Ilex meserveae* (Blue Holly)**

Prune during late winter

***Ilex verticillata* (Winterberry Holly)**

Best if not pruned

***Itea* (Virginia Sweetspire)**

Prune within 30 days after flowering

***Juniperus* (Juniper)**

Prune anytime Feb through March

***Kerria* (Japanese Greenstem)**

Prune after the initial spring flowering

***Lagerstroemia* (Crapemyrtle)**

Pruning is not necessary except to remove any dead wood in late spring after new leaves appear.

Leucothoe

For best growth results, prune during June or July

***Ligustrum* (Oval Leaf Privet)**

Prune anytime

Magnolia

No pruning necessary. Cut rogue stems if needed

***Microbiota* (Siberian Carpet Cypress)**

Prune anytime Nov through Apr

***Myrica* (Northern Bayberry)**

Prune to control rogue stems only

***Nandina* (Heavenly Bamboo)**

No pruning or maintenance needed

***Physocarpus* (Ninebark)**

No pruning necessary; you may cut rogue stems after flowering if desired

***Pieris* (Japanese Andromeda)**

Prune within 30 days after flowering

***Potentilla* (Cinquefoil)**

Prune during late winter

***Prunus* \times *cistena* (Purple Sand Cherry)**

Prune in mid spring after flowering

Pyracantha (Firethorn)

Prune minimally in midsummer. Hard cutting will cut any potential berries off

Rhododendron (Large-leaf and semi-dwarf)

No pruning necessary; shape only if desired. Do not fertilize past June

Rhododendron (Dwarf Rhododendron)

Prune within 21 days after flowering. Do not fertilize past June

Salix (Shrub Willow)

Prune anytime Nov through Mar

Spirea (Summer Blooming Spirea)

Trim lightly for rebloom. Shape in fall if needed

Spirea (Spring Bloom / Bridal Wreath Spirea)

Prune after flowering

Syringa (Lilac)

If needed, prune within 30 days after flowering

Thuja (Arborvitae)

Little to no care. Shape in late winter if needed

Viburnum

Prune within 30 days after flowering

Vitex (Chaste Shrub)

Prune back to 12" anytime Nov to Apr

Weigela (Cardinal Shrub)

Prune lightly in early summer to induce rebloom

[This guide is courtesy of Centeron Nursery](#)