

PRUNING TECHNIQUES FOR COMMON SHRUBS

AZALEAS (Rhododendron)

Prune as little as possible using heading back cuts -- always to an intersecting bud or branch. Remove old flower heads for better flowering the following year

BARBERRY (Berberis)

Heading, thinning or rejuvenation methods can be used. Early spring is best. Can also be sheared.

BAYBERRY (Myrica)

Recovers rapidly when pruned, so it can handle severe pruning methods if needed. To retain fruit, prune in late winter or early spring.

BLUEBEARD (Caryopteris)

Let branch structure remain for winter interest. In late spring cut back to a smaller framework of branches to about 8 to 10 inches.



CORALBERRY (Symphoricarpos)

Use the renewal method of pruning unless the plant is old and woody, then rejuvenate. Recovers rapidly. Late winter or early spring is best.

COTONEASTER

Heading back method works well -- always to an intersecting bud or branch.

CURRANT, ALPINE (Ribes)

If used as a hedge, prune in late spring after new growth matures. Can also be rejuvenated when old and woody. Do this in late winter or early spring.

DEUTZIA

Handles rejuvenation if needed. Heading back and renewal methods also work to control growth.

DOGWOOD

Use renewal method of pruning. Remove older dark stems in late autumn to early spring. Heading back or rejuvenation methods can be used to maintain desired size and shape.

EUONYMUS OR WINTERCREEPER

Use the renewal method of pruning from February to mid summer. Can also be rejuvenated.

EUONYMUS OR BURNING BUSH

Handles heading back cuts well, but when pruned repeatedly over time it will develop bare legs and an interior dead zone.

FORSYTHIA

Prune in late spring after flowering using the renewal method. If pruned in March branch tips can be brought inside to enjoy.

HOLLY (Ilex)

Tolerates heading back cuts. Best done in late spring.

HONEYSUCKLE (Lonicera)

Responds well to all types of pruning methods; November to March, or just after flowering.

HYDRANGEA, ANNABELLE OR HILLS OF SNOW

Best if severely pruned each spring. Cut all stems back to about 8 to 12 inches just after new growth appears.

HYDRANGEA, BIGLEAF OR ENDLESS SUMMER

Prune in the fall after blooming or in the spring after the hard frosts are over.

HYDRANGEA, OAKLEAF

A combination of thinning and heading cuts can be used to control shape and size. Always cut back to a live bud or to a side branch. Early spring is best. Renewal and rejuvenation methods might work on plants that are well established and show vigor.

HYDRANGEA, PANICLED OR PEE GEE

Very easy to prune and all methods can be used. Because this Hydrangea blooms on new wood, it can be pruned from late summer after blooming to early spring. Heading back without thinning, however, will result in a dead zone and leggy stems.

JUNIPER

Do not shear spreading or creeping Junipers. Do not cut back into old wood where no growth appears -- the "dead zone" -- as no new growth will regenerate. To maintain shape, cut back to lateral branches.

KERRIA

Remove two year old wood to the ground. Use the renewal method immediately after flowering in spring.

LILAC (Syringa)

Prune immediately after flowering using the renewal method. A common error is to use heading cuts in summer or fall which removes all flower buds for the following season.



Renewal pruning on Lilac

NINEBARK (Physocarpus)

For hedges or formal shapes prune in late spring after new growth matures. Renewal or rejuvenation methods can also be used to maintain desired size and shape.

POTENTILLA

Prune just as the green buds appear in early spring, using the renewal method.

PRIVET, REGELS BORDER (Ligustrum)

Use the renewal method to maintain a natural shape, late fall to early spring.

QUINCE (Chaenomeles)

Remove older stems as needed. Can be rejuvenated. For plant health, best time is just before flowering in spring. Enjoy cut branches indoors.

ROSE

Remove old, diseased, or unwanted canes in March before new growth begins.

ROSE-OF-SHARON (Hibiscus)

Remove old, diseased stems to ground level in early spring before new growth begins.

SPIREA, ANTHONY WATERER

Prune immediately after flowering using the rejuvenation method. In order to avoid a woody look, do this every 3 to 5 years.



Rejuvenation pruning on Spirea

VIBURNUM, KOREAN SPICE

Use a combination of thinning and heading back cuts to control shape and size. Prune from November to March, or immediately after flowering.

WEIGELA

Renewal prune with light heading back cuts to keep the plant in balance. Prune from November to March, or immediately after flowering. Older plants can be rejuvenated.



Sheared hedges in a formal garden

SPIREA, BRIDALWREATH

Prune using the renewal method in early spring, with a few heading back cuts to shape the plant. Does not shear well.

VIBURNUM, ARROWWOOD

Use the renewal method with a few heading back cuts to shape. Prune in late fall to early spring, or just after flowering.

YEW (Taxus)

Yews are very tolerant of heavy pruning and shearing. Shearing should be done after spring growth has matured, no later than July 1st. Light shearing can be done in the summer in order to maintain crisp lines.

Easy to prune, however once a plant has been sheared you will need to continue that technique for the lifetime of the plant. For a more sustaining and natural look use a combination of thinning and heading cuts to control size and shape.