

Pruning Shrubs

Summer blooming shrubs (which usually bloom after June 15th) bloom on new growth. Pruning should be done in the fall or late winter.

Examples of summer blooming shrubs:

Butterfly Bush
Blue Mist Spirea
Mock Orange
Potentilla
Japanese Spirea
Hydrangea

Spring blooming shrubs bloom on last year's wood. Pruning in the fall and winter will remove buds set to bloom in the spring. Pruning should instead be done right after blooming.

Examples of spring blooming shrubs:

Forsythia
Lilac
Vanhoutte Spirea
Viburnum
Weigelia

How to Prune:

Prune off any broken, damaged or pest-ridden branches and remove any branches that rub against each other. Then decide on the correct pruning method. The correct pruning method depends on the kind of shrub you have and whether you are pruning to encourage new growth, for aesthetic reasons or to treat damage.

Rejuvenation Pruning is cutting a shrub almost to the ground to encourage new growth.

Examples of shrubs that may benefit include Russian Sage, Butterfly Bush and Spirea.

Rejuvenation pruning should never be used on tree-like shrubs and should only be done every 3-5 years. The exception is Russian Sage and Butterfly Bush which benefit from a yearly rejuvenation pruning.

Thinning is systematically removing old wood branches to encourage new growth. Select the oldest, woodiest branches first and remove one third of the branches each year.

Works well on Lilac, Forsythia and Ninebark. Does not work well on Spirea or Potentilla.

Shaping is pruning to a desired shape or size. It should not be used to try and keep large shrubs very small.

Instead choose a variety that has a full-grown size better suited for the spot in your yard. Never prune more than 1/3 of the plant's branches.



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