

## [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 *shr.* (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 *x* 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](#)