

Floral and Hardy Gardening Guide



Passiflora at Floral & Hardy
September 2008
Photo: Gary S. Peterson, NJ

Table of Contents

How Plants Are Defined.....	3
Azaleas.....	4
Butterfly Gardens	5
Hydrangeas.....	6
Pruning Hydrangea	7
Crapemyrtle.....	8
Daylily	8
Roses.....	9
Pruning Roses	9
Perennial Pinching.....	11
Woody Shrubs – Pruning and Care.....	13
Pruning Woody Vines	15
Overwinter Care for Cannas, Dahlias, and Tender Bulbs	16
Deer/Rabbit Resistant Perennials.....	16

How Plants Are Defined

Leaf Holding Tendencies

One type of plant description is that of a plant's leaf holding tendencies in winter. This is commonly broken down into three categories.

1. **Evergreen** – An evergreen retains most of its leaves over the winter. That is not to say they do not shed: most do, but they hold on to at least the current year's new leaves.
2. **Semi Evergreen** – These hold on a portion of their leaves, usually hovering in the 20-40% range (as a wild estimate). To toss a monkey wrench into it, semi evergreens placed into a warmer region can act almost like evergreens, or sited in colder regions can act almost deciduous and still remain perfectly healthy and viable.
3. **Deciduous** – Deciduous plants lose (drop) 90-100% of their leaves in winter.

There are clear differences in the way the types manufacture and store their food. An evergreen is such because it must continually manufacture its own food, even when it appears dormant in winter. An evergreen stores very little food for itself. The chlorophyll (green) reacts with sunlight to make its own food. That explains why if you were to cut all the leaves from an evergreen it would struggle or die. Deciduous plants manufacture their food when they have leaves, but also store food, sending large quantities back into their woody, crown and root parts in fall. They live from this stored food during winter, and also use it as energy to push out the initial burst in spring, when it can once again start processing food from green leaves.

Wood Longevity

Another description depicts the long range viability of a plant's above-ground woody parts. We break these into:

1. **Shrub** – Shrubs have long lived woody tops. This wood remains viable and fruitful for three or more (usually way more) years.
2. **Sub Shrub** – Sub shrubs are those in-between types that don't die back completely but grow wood that, because of its cellular structure or lesser degree of hardiness, is short-lived. Sub shrubs tend to be hardy in their roots and the thickest parts of their lower stems and crowns. Examples of these are Caryopteris, Buddleia, Lavender, Perovskia and so on.
3. **Perennial** – These have tops that are herbaceous, soft and non-woody. Their tops die back completely in winter to the roots or crowns.

Overall Plant Longevity

This defines how long a plant lives.

1. **Annual** – An annual is a non-hardy plant that lives for one season only. However this classification is somewhat related to climate. Some annuals can be placed into warm environments where they act like perennials, sometimes living for years.
2. **Biennial** – This is a hardy plant that generally only lives two years. They tend to concentrate on growth development their first year, then concentrate on flowering and seeding the second (final) year.
3. **Perennial** – The perennial is a plant that lives three years or more.

Leaf Type

1. **Broadleaf** – Broadleaf plants include most deciduous shrubs, Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Hollies, Lilacs, most perennials and so on.
2. **Narrowleaf** – Narrowleaf plants include most conifers (Pine, Spruce, Juniper, Cypress, etc.) and grass like plants such as corn, turf, Miscanthus, and so on.

Azaleas

Right Site.

Azaleas like well-drained, moist soils. Think of it this way: they don't like their roots sitting in water, but they like to be watered. How to do that? Make a planting bed that drains, so we can irrigate without drowning them. There are numerous ways of improving drainage. Here are the two most effective:

1. Raise the level of the planting bed above the surrounding area. That way, after a soaking rain or irrigation, excess water drains away, leaving a moist, yet well-drained area.
2. Improve soil quality by adding organic matters. Organics improve drainage in clay soils by making them fluffy through aerating and oxygenating. Organics improve dry sandy soils by increasing their richness and water-holding capacity. Organics have another plus. Azaleas perform best in acidic soils. Most organic matters help make soils acidic.

Shady Characters

Azaleas appreciate some shade. A dappled, medium shade is just about perfect to "take the edge off" and help you safely through those summer vacations when you just can't water. Flowers bloom larger and for longer periods in shade, too. Azaleas grow in full sun with regular watering. (See "Mulch"). Deep shade is okay, too. It has its advantages and disadvantages. Leaves tend to be larger and glossier and watering needs are lowest in shade. On the other hand plants tend to "stretch" for the light, making them lanky. Some tastes go for that wild look but if you like a full, compact plant you'll have to prune severely in deep shade conditions. Finally, since setting of flower buds is largely a function of light, Azaleas are most floriferous in higher light sites.

Mulch – The Great Protector

Azaleas love mulch. Mulch protects. In summer, it acts like sunglasses, blocking the burning, drying sun. In winter, mulch is a blanket of protection against both quick freezes and extended cold which will damage roots. The best mulches are coarse organics like wood chips that allow easy water penetration.

Pruning

Azaleas set next spring's flower buds in July. If we prune after July 1st we're cutting off next year's buds! Prune in May or June, soon after flowering, and then let them be.

Feed me acid, man.

Another common question is "What can I do about yellow leaves on my Azaleas?" Fall yellowing is normal, when old interior and bottom leaves turn yellow and drop off. But if your Azaleas are showing chlorotic leaves in spring you've got one of two problems:

1. A non-hardy Azalea that's suffered root damage, replace it with a good northern grown Azalea
2. Your site soil is not adequately acidic. Don't plant Azaleas in limestone soils or up against lime/concrete based foundations. Never add lime to Azalea soils. Apply recommended rates of acidifying fertilizers and color should eventually green up.

Butterfly Gardens

Butterflies are cold-blooded animals becoming quite active at temperatures above 60 degrees Fahrenheit. During cool evenings and cloudy or rainy weather they roost on the underside of leaves, in woodpiles or other warm areas. Their wings are large in proportion to body size so Butterflies are vulnerable to strong winds. For this reason they generally restrict themselves to sunny, quiet, sheltered areas. Shrub borders and climbing vines on structures make good windbreak habitats. Butterflies frequent the edges of water puddles where concentrated sodium and minerals serve as nutritional liquid refreshment. Butterflies are drawn to flowers possessing strong fragrance, tubular shape and bright colors. They extract nectar from these plants.

Shrubs that attract Butterflies:

Abelia	Althaea (Rose of Sharon)	Azalea	Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)	Caryopteris (Blue Mist)
spirea	Syringa (Lilac)	Viburnum	Weigela	Yucca.

Perennials that attract Butterflies:

Achillea (Yarrow)	Agastache	Alcea (Hollyhock)	Allium (flowering Onion)	Asclepias (Butterfly Weed)
Aster	Astilbe	Boltonia	Campanula	Centranthus
Chrysanthemum	Coreopsis	Dianthus	Dicentra (Bleeding Heart)	Echinacea (Coneflower)
Eupatorium	Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)	Gaura	Geranium	Hemerocallis (Daylily)
Hibiscus	Kniphofia (Poker)	Lavendula	Liatris (Blazing Star)	Lilium (true Lilies)
Lobelia	Monarda (Bee Balm)	Nepeta (Catmint)	Penstemon	Phlox
Rudbeckia	Salvia (Sage)	Scabiosa (Pincushion)	Sedum	Solidago (Golden Rod)
Thymus (Thyme)	Verbena	and Veronica.		

Natural predators of Butterflies:

Birds, Spiders, Wasps, Mantids, and Flies.

Hydrangeas

Changing The Color of Hydrangea Flowers

Not all Hydrangeas can be color-manipulated. For example, white Hydrangeas cannot be manipulated to pink or blue. Only those varieties containing color pigments can be changed. Color is dependent upon the pH of the soil solution in and around the plant. (pH is pronounced like the letters). By altering pH, we affect the color pigments and alter bloom color.

pH

pH expresses the level of soil acidity or alkalinity as measured on a scale of zero to 14. A pH of 7 is neutral; neither acidic nor alkaline. Numbers below 7 indicate increasingly acidic conditions. Numbers above 7 designate progressively more alkaline situations. pH does not change what elements are in a soil, rather, it affects the availability of those elements to plants. In other words, while an element may be present in a soil, that doesn't mean it's being absorbed. The absorption of elements is determined by how much of the element is there, and if the pH is at a point on the scale to make the element available.

Chemical Elements

There are chemical elements in the soil: nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, iron, aluminum, boron, magnesium, calcium and so on. These elements interact with plants, "feed" plants, and support plant processes. Aluminum is the key element concerning Hydrangea color control. Color depends first and foremost on the availability of aluminum in the soil. Aluminum (when available at acidic pH readings) reacts with the pigments in the plant, turning flower sepals blue. Aluminum ions are increasingly available for plant absorption as the pH becomes more acidic. Blue tones can be obtained at a potent acid level. That level is attained by acidifying your soil to get it to a pH between 5.5 and 4.5. Inversely, deep pinks are obtained by approaching more neutral levels (the 6.0-6.5 pH range).

Lower pH levels

For to-be-planted beds, deeply rotivate 1-2 pounds of aluminum sulphate per each Hydrangea plant to be installed. For established beds, spread aluminum sulphate over the root areas. Apply 1-2 pounds of aluminum sulphate per bush, twice: once in November then repeat in March. Stay towards the 1 pound rate for light sandy soils; favor the 2 pound rate for heavy clay soils. These rates should drop the pH by about 1.5 points. In other words it will lower a pH from 6.5 to a pH of 5.0. Once you have attained the desired pH (and bloom color), does it need to be maintained? That depends on the soils in your area as well as any amendments brought into your site. Soils in the east and northwest United States tend to be naturally acidic, made so by frequent rains washing natural acids from the atmosphere. Soils in the drier mid-west and southwest tend to be alkaline. But that won't apply to each locale and certainly not to each site. Some localized regions have deposits of calcium rock, giving their soils an alkalinity. And concrete foundations and walks are made primarily of limestone that can leach into your soil. So, watch your plants. If they seem to be losing blue tone, then you'll need to restock the soil with aluminum. You can do this by making an annual surface application as described above. A side note: fertilizers high in ammonium and potassium slightly enhance blue tones in Hydrangea.

Raise pH levels

For to-be-planted beds, deeply rotivate 1 lb. of ground limestone per each Hydrangea plant to be installed. For established beds, spread ground limestone over the root areas once in November and again in March. As a general guide, apply 1 lb. per bush at each application. Should any chlorosis occur (because iron starvation can happen around a neutral pH), additions of iron will be needed. If this happens, mix 1 ounce of iron sulphate in a gallon of water and water it in around each plant. Note: high phosphorus fertilizers slightly enhance pink tones in Hydrangea. How long does it take for changes to occur? It isn't instantaneous. These elements are long lasting and slow-moving in the soil. Neither limestone nor aluminum are highly soluble so lots of watering and time are essential to move the material into the soil. Exhausting the elements stored in the soil solution as well as in a Hydrangea's plant system, and re-charging those systems with different elements, may take months. In other words, what you do this year will have a strong effect upon what you'll see happen next year.

Pruning Hydrangea

General Siting Guidelines That Apply To All Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas like rich, moist soil. While they can't live in water, they are big drinkers. On hot days, their fleshy leaves and stems call for lots of water. Site them where they'll get irrigation. If your planting site has poor soil, enrich it with organic matter, and generous mulching is recommended to help preserve moisture. All will bloom in sun but too much sun stresses the foliage. Ideally, the site should get morning sun. Most cultivars of Hydrangea benefit from a touch of afternoon shade to relieve the heat stress posed to the foliage by the most intense heat and light of the day. At the opposite extreme, Hydrangeas will not bloom reliably in deep shade. If you've sited your plant in most or all day shade, wait till late winter then re-transplant it to a location that gets more light.

Pruning Guidelines For Specific Branches of the Hydrangea Family

Hydrangea macrophylla (Hortenia or Mophead Hydrangea) - Typical cultivars: Nikko, Forever Pink, Sister Therese

They get their flower buds from last year's wood (what we call "old wood"). Pruning should be done only when necessary, and they'll suffer a lack of flowering if severely pruned. Once growth begins in spring and you can see parts that are not going to sprout, cut off those dead branch portions, then let them be! ***Hydrangea "newly discovered" mopheads - Typical cultivars: Dooley, Penny Mac, Endless Summer***

Recent discoveries have uncovered mophead cultivars that bloom on old wood and somewhat on new wood. These are less affected by an overzealous pruner because they are not depending strictly on the old wood to produce blooms. If needed, prune in winter then leave be if at all possible. Later on, if parts of stems do not sprout in spring, cut the branch back to the point where growth activity is taking place.

Hydrangea paniculata (Panicle Hydrangea) - Typical cultivars: Pee Gee, Tardiva, Limelight, Pink Diamond

These bloom on new wood. What does that tell us? That old wood isn't important. These can be pruned back severely if done at the right time. Pruning fresh growth during summer will upset the maturity and caliper of the stem and disturb flower bud initiation, so the right timing for pruning is winter or pre-spring. Whack the devil out of it, but then lay off the pruning shears the rest of the season.

Hydrangea quercifolia (Oakleaf Hydrangea) - Typical cultivars: Snow Queen, Snowflake, Syke's Dwarf

These bloom only from the old wood. They are best left untrimmed. If pruning is absolutely necessary I find removing entire stems in late winter works best. You can shape it up, but remember, any tip you cut off, you're also cutting off a future flower.

Hydrangea arborescens (Smooth Hydrangea) - Typical cultivars: Annabelle, White Dome

Flowers arrive on new wood: old wood is not necessary for bloom. They can be severely shaped in winter or pre-spring, then leave them be until winter arrives again.

Hydrangea anomala (Climbing Hydrangea) - also includes the genus Schizopragma

These are slow-growing, woody vines that cling to structures via air roots. They bloom on old wood with wide, flat, lacecap type flowers. While pruning will eliminate flowering, mature plants are many-stemmed, so some shape-correction or runner-control won't wipe out all your blooms. Pruning is best done in the winter. Note: Schizopragmas, close cousins to climbing Hydrangeas, are similar vining types. They are handled the same as Hydrangea anomala.

Crapemyrtle

The key is good root establishment. Gardeners from coastal DelMarVa and southward need only treat these as ordinary shrubs. With adequate moisture and a sunny spot they perform admirably. For those northward, we take one precaution the first couple winters. Freeze dieback occurs worst on young crowns and thin stems. Install some time between mid spring and August. Once leaves drop in fall, secure a 2-3' barrier around your Crapemyrtle, using stakes and burlap. Fill this cavity with dried tree leaves. Do not pack them tight: leave them loose. Some settling will occur and exposed branches may dieback: that's okay. In spring, remove the barrier and leaves. Spread 6 oz. of granular 10-10-10 fertilizer over the root zone, then reapply 3-4" of mulch to cover the root zone surface. Do not re-fertilize during the rest of the season. Once the plant begins growing, prune off any dead stems. Repeat this protection program for a second winter. After that, your Crapemyrtle will do well on its own.

Daylily

Daylily foliage can be classified into three fairly distinct categories:

1. Dormant – All the foliage dies back to the ground during winter. The plant then forms new leaf buds at the crown of the plant.
2. Evergreen – The foliage above ground remains green and alive throughout the year. It may stop growing in colder weather, but the plant attempts to keep its leaves going.
3. Semi-evergreen – This is nothing more than a way of saying that the plant shows characteristics of both dormant and evergreen traits.

Most people work by the rule of thumb that the more dormant a daylily is, the better it will live in colder climate; and along the same lines, daylilies that are more evergreen will not grow as well in colder climates. This is, for the most part, a good rule to follow. For nearly 80% of daylilies, their foliage truly represents their hardiness. There are, however, exceptions to the rule (of course).

Hard Dormant or Soft Dormant

Hard Dormant

Daylilies that die back and form hard buds during winter. These daylilies are truly the hardiest of all, and have been known to survive in certain areas of a zone 3 climate.

Soft dormant

Die back to ground level and form buds that can sometimes feel a bit squishy. They do not shut down quite as well as hard dormants do, and they therefore begin growing a bit earlier in the spring, which can leave them susceptible to be hurt by late frosts. Many soft dormants perform extremely well in very cold climates.

Roses

Two Vital Words..... Site and Variety

Roses grow best with plenty of soil moisture but minimal wet foliage. When leaf surfaces remain wet a good part of the day, fungi “germinate”. Fungal diseases appear as black spots, powdery residues, or both. If conditions persist, they damage the tissue, causing leaf drop. This does not kill the plant but does inhibit vigor. Here in the eastern United States we have to deal with rain, excess humidity and dew: all big contributors to wet foliage. But we can make rose growing easy if we remember two vital words: site and variety.

A Proper Site: Choose a Proper Site

Sun and breezes chase dew away, so look for sites with maximum exposure. “Full sun” is preferable. Placed in the woods, crammed in a garden or jammed against a house isn’t “full sun”. Wide open areas where sun hits early in the morning and stays in full view until late in the day, is “full sun”.

Space

Space plants with some breathing room. Before installation, learn how wide the variety grows then make allowances for light and air space. For example, if the variety grows 3-4’ wide, plant them 5-6’ apart. Obey this recommendation on a by-variety basis. Proper site selection is easy.

Selection

1. The Knockout® Series and its offspring have excellent disease resistance. Look for Knockout, Pink Knockout, Blushing Knockout, Double Knockout, Rainbow Knockout, and so on. Many of Knockout’s offspring (some of which do not carry the Knockout name) are also fantastic disease fighters.
2. Shrub Roses - Most of the Meidiland® series: in our experience the best are Scarlet Meidiland, Fire Meidiland, Panda Meidiland and Magic Meidiland. Other clean shrub roses to look for are Carefree Delight, Carefree Wonder, Chuckles, Lady Elsie May, Pretty Lady, Rockin Robin, and What A Peach.

Water

Minimize wetting of the foliage. If you use overhead or side throwing sprinklers have them turn on early in the day to allow plenty of time for foliage to dry before nightfall. Better yet, use a drip system or a soaker hose that drops water right at ground level. If you water by hand, set the nozzle at the plant’s base and adjust the volume to low and slow so the soil gets saturated without a bunch of splashing onto the foliage. As always, water early in the day so if the foliage gets damp it has time to dry.

Pruning Roses

The following apply to all roses:

Cut your roses to harvest blooms and tidy up the plant. Most modern roses are repeat bloomers so whether you cut or you don’t, you’ll still get blossoms. It’s good to prune roses back hard in late winter. It doesn’t harm them: it helps them. Rose wood has a short life. They thrive on rejuvenation. Even climbers with wood that stays viable for years eventually decline and are “re-born” by giving them a brutal cut.

As to timing the pre-spring pruning, leaves drop between late fall and early winter. That’s a sign that active top-growth has ceased and carbohydrates have transmuted their storage back into stems and roots. From this date until break of spring, the timing is appropriate for pruning. Do it in December, January or February: makes no difference as long as it’s after leaf drop and prior to bud break in spring.

It goes without saying, any dead wood should be removed. Diseases lie in wait on dried leaves and old branches so you want to get rid of those potential trouble makers. Once you’re done pruning, rake the debris and discard them.

Caned Types

Tea roses (Exhibition or Cutting roses) make long stemmed individual blooms like what you’d see at the florist. They grow upright, 4-7’. Grandifloras are nearly identical but cluster-blooming. Floribundas (Little

Landscaping roses), fall into this pruning group, too. Their flowers are similar to the teas but clustered like the grands and grow about two-thirds the size of the others, usually 3-4'. All caned roses are treated alike in regards to pre-spring pruning. Whack the whole plant back to 12-15" above the base. Use shears, loppers, clippers: whatever works. Next, visually select out 3-5 of the fattest, freshest looking canes to retain. Ideally these should be away from the center of the plant and away from one another, making for maximum air and sun and minimal crowding. Cut all the other canes off completely, to the base. Then remove all the side branches from your 3-5 selected canes. You should be left with 3-5 lone separated canes about 12-15" high.

Shrubby Types

Shrub roses (aka Shrub & Hedge roses) grow dense and twiggy. They branch heavily and grow 4-6' tall. Blooms are clustered, smaller and unsophisticated in form. (I predict hybridizers will breed magnificent blooms into shrub roses, at which time we'll get the best of both worlds: beauty with simplified maintenance.) Groundcovers roses are shrubs roses, too, only lower and spreading. Rugosas (Seaside & Cottage roses) are similar to shrubs in that they are shrubby-caned and many branched. Trimming shrub roses is totally optional. You can trim or not, very hard or just a little, any time except during fall. Use shears, electric trimmers, chain saws, whatever works. Don't fuss over the canes. Just whack the whole bush into a shape that pleases you. You won't hurt it! Whether you trim or not, once every 3-5 years they'll need a rejuvenation cut: take them back almost to their base. They'll come back fast and bloom like crazy.

Climbing Types

Known as Ramblers or Arbor, Trellis & Pillar roses, these are simply tall caned roses (typically 8-15' when let go) with sprawling stems and relatively long-lived wood. They're naturals for training and attaching to structures. A general guide is to do minimal pruning for three years, then a severe pruning the fourth. You don't have to keep track of it: just watch how the plant is doing. If it seems to decline, the next winter will be the time for a hard pruning. Most years, just cut out the dead wood and do a little thinning so branches don't crowd one another. Then for the hard prune year, go in and seriously remove the oldest looking main stems and do severe thinning. You can even thin out annually if you want to but it's not really necessary.

Perennial Pinching

Achillea (Yarrow)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Aconitum (Monkshood)

IN SEASON - may need staking; do not pinch
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Agepodium (Bishop's Weed)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Agastache (Hyssop)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Ajuga (Bugleweed)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Alchemilla (Lady's Mantle)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Allium (Onion)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Alopecurus (Ornamental Foxtail)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Anemone (Fall Anemone)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Aquilegia (Columbine)

IN SEASON - may need staking, otherwise leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Arenaria (Sand Herb)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Armeria (Seathrift)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Artemisia

IN SEASON - pinching improves branching in tall types
OFF SEASON - wait to spring then cut back hard

Aster (Hardy Aster)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Astilbe (False Goatsbeard)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Calamagrostis (Reedgrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Campanula (Bellflower)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Carex (Sedgegrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Chelone (Turtlehead)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Chrysanthemum (Shasta Daisy)

IN SEASON - pinching sometimes encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Coreopsis

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Cortaderia (True Pampas)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Crocsmia (Swordflower)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Delosperma (Ice Plant)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Dianthus (Garden Pinks)

IN SEASON - pinching sometimes encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Dicentra (Bleeding Heart)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Digitalis (Foxglove)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Doronicum

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Echinacea (Coneflower)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Erianthus (Plumegrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Eupatorium

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Euphorbia (Wood Spurge)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Fallopia (False Bamboo)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Festuca (Fescue)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - cut back by 80%

Gaillardia (Blanketflower)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Galium (Sweet Woodruff)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Gaura (Wandflower)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Gazania (Freeway Daisy)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Geranium (Cranesbill)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Gypsophila (Baby's Breath)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Helenium

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Helleborus (Lenten Rose)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Helianthus (Hardy Sunflower)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Hemerocallis (Daylily)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Heuchera (Coralbells)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Heucherella (Foamybells)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Hibiscus (Marsh Mallow)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Hosta

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Iris

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Kniphofia (Poker)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - cut back by 80%

Lamiastrum

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Lamium

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Lavandula (Lavender)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Liatris (Blazingstar)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Ligularia

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Liriope (Lilyturf)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Lobelia (Cardinalflower)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Lychnis coronaria

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Lysimachia

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Mazus

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Miscanthus (Japanese Silvergrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Monarda (Bee Balm)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be

OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Nepeta (Catmint)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Oenothera (Sundrops)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Ophiopogon (Mondograss)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Panicum (Switchgrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Pennisetum (Fountaingrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Penstemon

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Perovskia (Middle Eastern Sage)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - cut back by 90%, leave a stump

Phalaris (Ribbongrass)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Phlox paniculata

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Phlox subulata (Mountain Pinks)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Physostegia

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - cut back to ground level

Polemonium (Jacob's Ladder)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Potentilla (Cinquefoil)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Pulmonaria

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Rudbeckia

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Salvia (Sage)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Scabiosa (Pincushion)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Sedum

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Sidalcea (Miniature Hollyhock)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Solidago (Golden Rod)

IN SEASON - pinch early season for branching, then leave be
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Stachys

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - clean out dead areas / leaves

Stokesia

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Tanacetum (Sunfern)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Teucrium (Germander)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - cut back by 80%

Thymus (Thyme)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Tiarella (Foamflower)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Tradescantia (Spiderwort)

IN SEASON - pinching encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Tricyrtis (Toadlily)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Trifolium (Clover)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - needs nothing, leave go

Verbascum (Mullein)

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Veronica (Speedwell)

IN SEASON - pinching sometimes encourages rebloom
OFF SEASON - shear back leaving green crown of foliage

Yucca

IN SEASON - needs nothing, leave go
OFF SEASON - cut out old flower stalks

Woody Shrubs – Pruning and Care

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 syr. (Woody Hibis./Rose of Sharon)

Prune anytime Jan through April

Hydrangea arborescens (Caphead Hydrangea)

Prune during late winter

Hydrangea macrophylla (Mophead Hydrangea)

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 mid summer. 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

Pruning Woody Vines

Campsis (Trumpet)

These can take years of landscape establishment before they begin blooming. Once they reach that stage they can be of a size that needs checking. Flower buds are not obvious like on many other plants, so cutting off tips risks removing future flowers. The best way to control size while allowing bloom is to annually remove the longest runners. Good wintertime project.

Celastrus scandens (American Bittersweet)

These bloom on new wood. Prune them to size in winter.

Clematis - spring / summer type

The most typical and popular of the Clematis are the new wood bloomers. These can be cut back by half to three-quarters each winter. That said, this is a tough group to nail in short order because of the many types. Some bloom only on old wood, some on new, and some on both. You may want to consult one of the extensive texts available that discuss Clematis pruning on variety-by-variety basis.

Clematis - fall type

The Sweet Autumn Clematis blooms on new wood. Cut to control size in winter then leave them be.

Gelsemium (Jasmine)

New hardier forms of this lovely vine are finally available. Jasmines bloom on old wood so prune shortly after flowering then let them be.

Hedera (Ivy)

The ivy family has some sweet slow growers that deserve a place in American landscapes. They can be cut back as desired any month.

Hydrangea petiolaris and Schizophragma (Climbing Hydrangeas)

They bloom on old wood with wide, flat, lacecap type flowers. While pruning will eliminate flowering, mature plants are many-stemmed, so some shape-correction or runner-control won't wipe out all your blooms. Pruning is best done in winter.

Lonicera (Honeysuckle)

Honeysuckles can bloom from both old and new wood, so pruning just about any time is fine. Once established, they will rejuvenate from being cut back or thinned out very hard every three years.

Parthenocissus tricuspidata (Boston Ivy)

These only need pruning to control or direct growth. Do this any time of year.

Polygonum aubertii (Fleece Vine)

A natural for covering wire fences. It blooms on new wood. Prune back as hard as ½ in winter.

Rosa (Climbing Rose)

These aren't really "climbers": they're varieties that grow lengthy, long lived canes that can be attached to structures. In winter, thin them out by removing some of the longest canes, then remove some of the side branches of the others. Allow some horizontal stemming to remain, as these seem to produce more blooms than vertical stems.

Vitis (Grape)

Grapes bloom on new wood. Trim them to desired shape in late winter.

Wisteria

While most bloom from old wood, some new cultivars like 'Amethyst Falls' bloom from both old and new wood. Old wood bloomers should be cut back and thinned out after flowering. Multi-season bloomers should only be thinned out in winter.

Overwinter Care for Cannas, Dahlias, and Tender Bulbs

Wait till fall and after a couple hard freezes so that the tops have browned completely, then whack them off just above the ground. Using a shovel, pop the bulb out of the ground. By shaking, rolling, cutting and / or washing, get 99% of the soil off. If there are any aged or shriveled looking parts, cut them off and discard them. Dip or wash the bulbs in a solution of 9 parts water to 1 part household bleach*. (Do not rinse after this but do pat dry). Place in a cardboard box, both nesting and covering the bulb with loosely crumpled newspaper. Keep in a cool, dark, but not freezing place between 40°and 60°F. A 55°F basement or garage is ideal. Check them a couple times over the winter. If bulbs appear to be shriveling from dryness, drop them in cool water for a couple minutes, pat dry and return them to storage. If there is any sign of mold, repeat the bleach solution, then pat dry and re-store. At frost free date (usually mid-April to mid-May, depending on your area), plant the bulbs setting their highest point a couple inches below the surface. Adding compost and a slow release fertilizer to the backfill soil will help them grow bigger, faster and better.

Deer/Rabbit Resistant Perennials

Achillea	Centranthus	Euonymus coloratus
Aconitum	Ceratostigma	Euphorbia robbiae
Agastache	Chelone	Ferns
Ajuga	Chrysanthemum	Gaillardia
Alchemilla mollis	Cimicifuga	Galium
Anemone	Clematis	Geranium
Armenisia	Convallaris	Hedera helix (ivy)
Aster	Coreopsis	Helleborus
Astilbe	Crocsmia	Heuchera
Baptisia	Dianthus	Hydrangea spp.
Bergenia	Dicentra	Hypericum calycinum
Brunnera	Digitalis	Iberis
Buddleia	Echinacea	Kniphofia
Caryopteris	Epimedium	Lamium
Lamiaeastrum	Rudbeckia	Lavandula
Santolina	Liatris	Scabiosa
Ligularia	Sedum	Monarda
Spiraea	Nepeta	Stachys
Oenothera	Stokesia	Ornamental grasses
Thymus	Paeonia	Tiarella
Pachysandra	Tradescantia	Pentstemon
Veronica	Perovskia	Weigela florida
Phlox divaricata	Yucca	Pulmonaria
Salvia		