

# Timing of Maintenance Pruning for Woody Ornamentals

Some woody landscape plants should be pruned in late winter, while still dormant, others should be pruned after flowering (otherwise you might not have many flowers), and still others can be pruned before or after flowering. Some species benefit from ground-line pruning, which would be disastrous for other species. But which techniques are appropriate for which plants?

## PRUNE DURING THE DORMANT SEASON

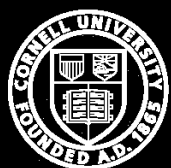
*All are summer-flowering plants that produce their blooms on growth of the same season.*

*Albizia* (mimosas)  
*Aesculus* (Horse Chestnut)  
\**Buddleia* (Butterfly Bush)  
*Callicarpa* (Beautyberry)  
\**Caryopteris* (Blue Spirea)  
*Ceanothus* (New Jersey tea or redroot)  
\**Cornus alba* (Dogwood)  
\**Cornus racemosa* (Dogwood)  
*Hibiscus syriacus* (rose-of-Sharon)  
*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora' (peegeehydrangea)  
\**Hydrangea arborescens*  
*Hypericum* (St. Johnswort)  
*Koelreuteria paniculata* (golden-rain tree)  
*Lespedeza* (bush clover)  
*Ligustrum* (privet)  
*Potentilla* (cinquefoil)  
*Rosa* (hybrid tea)  
\**Sorbaria* (false spirea)  
*Spiraea bumalda* 'Anthony Waterer'  
\**Symphoricarpos* (snowberry)  
\**Vitex* (chaste tree)

\*Requires some annual maintenance pruning in late February or March. May also be cut back severely, if necessary, at that time.

## PRUNE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING FLOWERING

*Amelanchier* (serviceberries)  
*Berberis* (barberries) invasive  
*Calycanthus* (sweet shrubs)  
*Caragana* (pea shrubs)  
*Cercis* (redbuds)  
*Chaenomeles* (flowering quinces)  
*Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood)  
*Cornus kousa* (Kousa dogwood)  
*Cornus mas* (Cornelian cherry)  
*Cotinus coggygria* (smoke tree)  
*Crataegus* (hawthorns)  
*Deutzia* (deutzias)  
*Forsythia*  
*Hydrangea macrophylla*  
*Hydrangea quercifolia*  
*Kalmia latifolia* (mountain laurel)  
*Kolkwitzia amabilis* (beautybush)  
*Ligustrum* (privets)  
*Lonicera* (honeysuckles)  
*Magnolia* (magnolias)  
*Malus* (crabapple)  
*Philadelphus* (mock oranges)  
*Pieris*  
*Prunus* (cherries and plums)  
*Pyracantha* (fire thorns)  
*Rhododendron* (azaleas and rhododendrons)  
*Rosa* (climbers and shrub roses)  
*Sorbus* (mountain ashes)  
*Spiraea thunbergii* (Thunberg spirea)  
*Spiraea x vanhouttei* (Van Houtte spirea)  
*Styrax japonica* (Japanese snowbell)  
*Syringa* (lilacs)  
*Viburnum x burkwoodii* (Burkwood viburnum)  
*Viburnum carlesii* (Korean viburnum)  
*Viburnum lantana* (wayfaring tree)  
*Viburnum opulus* (European cranberry bush)  
*Viburnum plicatum forma tomentosum* (double file viburnum)



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**PRUNE ANYTIME (EXCEPT IN THE FALL)**

*Cornus sericea* (red-osier dogwood)  
*Cotoneaster apiculatus* (cranberry cotoneaster)  
*Cotoneaster divaricatus* (spreading cotoneaster)  
*Cotoneaster multiflorus* (multiflora cotoneaster)  
*Mahonia Aquifolium* (Oregon grape)  
*Spiraea x bumalda* (Hybrid spirea)  
*Symphoricarpos albus* (snowberry)  
*Symphoricarpos x chenaultii* (Chenault snowberry)  
*Weigela florida* (rose weigela)

**SELDOM NEED PRUNING *Only an occasional corrective thinning or removal of out-of-scale branches.***

*Aesculus parviflora* (bottlebrush buckeye)  
*Amelanchier* (shadbush, serviceberry, juneberry)  
*Aronia* (chokeberry)  
*Chaenomeles* (flowering quince)  
*Clethra* (summersweet)  
*Corylus* (hazelnut)  
*Cotoneaster*  
*Cytisus* (broom)  
*Diervilla* (dwarf bush honeysuckle)  
*Forsythia*  
*Hamamelis* (witch hazel)  
*Hypericum*  
*Ilex* (holly, deciduous types)  
*Ligustrum* (privet) shrubs  
*Lindera benzoin* (spicebush)  
*Lonicera* (honeysuckle)  
*Myrica* (bayberry)  
*Potentilla fruticosa* (cinquefoil)  
*Rhus* (sumac)  
*Ribes* (currant)  
*Rosa* (rose)  
*Viburnum*

**THESE SPRING-FLOWERING SHRUBS are *NORMALLY pruned immediately after flowering. However, if they become overgrown, they may be pruned in late winter/early spring before foliage appears and the form is easier to see. Thin old canes by cutting at ground level.***

*Deutzia*  
*Exochorda* (pearlbush)  
*Kerria japonica* (Japanese kerria)  
*Kolkwitzia amabilis* (beauty bush)  
*Physocarpus opulifolius* (ninebark)  
*Philadelphus* (mock orange)  
*Stephanandra incisa* (cutleaf stephanandra)  
*Spiraea prunifolia* (bridal wreath)  
*Spiraea thunbergii* (thunberg spirea)  
*Spiraea x vanhouttei* (Vanhoutte spirea)  
*Weigela florida* (*old fashioned weigela*)

**THESE PLANTS CAN BE REJUVENATED *by cutting back severely in early spring.***

*Buddleia davidii* (orange-eye butterfly bush)  
*Clematis x jackmanii* (Jackman clematis)  
*Forsythia*  
*Hibiscus syriacus* (Rose-of-sharon)  
*Hydrangea arborescens*  
*Lonicera* (honeysuckles)  
*Spiraea* (spireas)  
*Syringa* (lilacs)

**DEAD FLOWERS SHOULD BE REMOVED *immediately after bloom.***

*Rhododendron* sp. (Rhododendron and azalea)  
*Kalmia latifolia* (mountain laurel)  
*Syringia vulgaris* (common lilac)