

6. Ornamental Shrubs

Shrubs are woody plants that produce stems from the base to form a bushy framework of branches. Follow an annual maintenance schedule to keep shrubs healthy, tidy and flowering abundantly.

Annual Schedule

Early Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply fertiliser to the base of all shrubs. • Prune spring flowering shrubs after flowering • Prune autumn flowering shrubs • Hard prune shrubs grown for their attractive leaves
Late Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to prune autumn flowering shrubs now • Continue to prune spring flowering shrubs after flowering • Prune evergreens • Prune grey leaved shrubs • Remove green growth from variegated shrubs • Trim topiary
Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water. Particularly new shrubs and during periods of draught • Prune summer flowering shrubs after flowering • Continue to trim evergreens • Continue to remove green growth from variegated shrubs • Continue to trim topiary • Remove green growth from variegated shrubs • Deadhead buddleja
Autumn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadhead buddleja
Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health check all shrubs • Refirm after strong winds and frosts



Buddleja Davidii

Pruning Schedule by Shrub

Early Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring flowering shrubs after flowering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forsythia x intermedia 'Lynwood Variety' (Forsy LV) Autumn flowering shrubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrangea Paniculata 'Phantom' (Hyd P) Hypericum 'Hidcote' (Hyp H) Shrubs grown for their attractive leaves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cotinus coggygria 'Royal Purple' (Cot RP) Sambucus Nigra 'Black Lace' (Samb BL)
Late Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to prune autumn flowering shrubs now Continue to prune spring flowering shrubs after flowering Evergreens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buxus Sepervirens (Bux S) Choisya Ternata 'Sundance' (Chois S) Euonymus ALL (Euon SQ) (Euon EG) Fatsia Japonica (Fat J) Photinia x fraseri 'Red Robin' (Phot RR) Lonicera ALL (Lon BG) (Lon MG) (Lon SB) Pieris 'Flaming Silver' (Pier FS) Prunus ALL (Pru O) (Pru Lus) (Pru Lau) Salvia x jamensis 'Hot Lips' (Salv HL) Skimmia ALL (Sk R) (Sk KG) Osmanthus Heterophyllus 'Goshiki' (Osma G) Rhododendron (Rhodo) Viburnum ALL (Vib EP) (Vib D) Grey leaved shrubs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lavandula Angustifolia 'Hidcote' (Lav H) Trim topiary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buxus Sepervirens (Bux S) Deadhead Erysimum 'Bowles's Mauve' (Ery BM)
Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prune summer flowering shrubs after flowering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escallonia 'Iveyii (Esc I) Physocarpus Opulifolius 'Lady in Red' (Phys LiR) Weigela 'Florida variegata' (Weigh FV) Thin Berberis thunbergii (Berb) Deadhead Erysimum 'Bowles's Mauve' (Ery BM) Continue to trim evergreens Continue to trim topiary
Autumn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadhead Buddleja Deadhead Erysimum 'Bowles's Mauve' (Ery BM)
Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prune when dormant (if required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amelanchier lamarckii (Am LAR) Cotoneaster horizontalis (Cot H) Corylus ALL (Cory A) (Cory MP)

Further Information

Not all shrubs have the same requirements. Pay attention to newly planted shrubs and make sure they are watered and fed well particularly during the first few years.

Shrubs may be grown for their attractive flowers, leaves or stems. To maximise these attributes shrubs should be pruned carefully and at the right time. Remove the oldest, less productive growth in order to make room for younger, healthy and productive shoots.

Flowering Deciduous Shrubs

Be sure to prune at the right time of the year to avoid removing flower buds. Correct pruning will keep the shrub healthy, balanced and will encourage the production of copious flowers and fruits.

Prune **spring and summer flowering shrubs** immediately after flowering to allow new stems to ripen before winter sets in. Cut back the stems that have flowered to strong new shoots and the resulting growth will flower again the following year.

Hard prune **late summer and autumn flowering shrubs** in early spring as these shrubs flower on the current year's stems. Hard pruning will result in vigorous new stems that will flower later in the year. Wait until growth buds start to shoot before pruning.

Some **summer and autumn flowering shrubs** on the borderline of hardiness should not be pruned until mid or late spring when the risk of frost has passed as they will benefit from the extra protection offered by old stems and flowerheads.

Shrubs with decorative stems and foliage

Shrubs that are grown for their **colourful winter stems** should be hard pruned annually in spring. The colour of stems fades with age so early annual pruning will produce lots of vibrantly coloured young growth. If some height to the shrub is required prune hard just one third of stems per year focussing on the oldest stems. Continue this process annually. This technique can also be carried out if flowering is desired. The pruned stems will regrow with renewed colour and the unpruned stems will have the potential to flower.

Several shrubs and trees are grown for their **colourful foliage**. They will produce larger and more colourful leaves if they are hard pruned annually in spring. As with pruning for colourful stems this hard pruning will prevent flowering. If flowering is required, prune out one third of stems over a three-year cycle. The pruned stems will produce larger and more colourful foliage and the unpruned stems will produce flowers. Alternatively prune the shrub less harshly.

Many deciduous shrubs develop a naturally balanced framework of permanent branches that require **minimal pruning** once established. They produce new growth from the perimeter of the branch framework rather than producing lots of vigorous new growth from the base. The most important pruning therefore is carried out in the first few years to encourage a good basic framework. After that minimal pruning is required to keep it healthy and in good shape.

Evergreen Shrubs

Young evergreen shrubs may require some formative pruning to create a balanced framework of branches. Following that evergreens need only minimal pruning to maintain a balanced shape with plenty of healthy, bright summer foliage.

The optimum time to prune evergreen shrubs is in late spring just after new growth turns a darker shade of green. Pruning at this time ensures that wounds have time to heal and regrowth has time to ripen before winter. Pruning before late spring leaves resultant young growth vulnerable to frost damage. Remove all dead, dying, damaged and diseased stems as well as all wayward branches. Spring flowering evergreens should be pruned immediately after flowering.

Grey-leaved Evergreen Shrubs

Evergreens with grey leaves quickly become straggly and woody if left unpruned and need a light annual prune to keep them healthy and in good shape. Prune sideshoots every year in late spring or early summer by cutting back to buds or where leaves are emerging. They should not be cut back hard as they do not regrow from old wood.

Topiary

Evergreens with a fine branch structure and small leaves lend themselves well to topiary. With patience they can be trained into a range of basic and intricate shapes. Once a plant has grown to the required height the leading shoot should be cut and the rest of the plant clipped into the desired shape. Regular clipping will encourage further growth and as the plant matures the branches will knit together to create a solid shape. Trim topiary twice a year between late spring and autumn.