



# Pruning Tips for Winter Hardy Plants

## Timeline

- Of the four seasons, winter is the best time to prune most plants. Summer is the second best, spring the third, and fall is the least favorable time to prune.
- The winter pruning season does not begin until after a couple of hard freezes, generally occurring in mid to late November. These hard freezes will take the plants into full dormancy. Full dormancy prevents any sensitive/tender new growth from emerging and being damaged in winter. Waiting to prune until winter also allows you to see the structure of most plants, making pruning easier.

## Deciduous Trees & Shrubs

- Pruning on most deciduous plants should be completed during the winter season. Take caution when pruning those that bloom.
- The following is a list of blooming plants that should not be pruned in winter. Prune instead right after flowering is complete: Azaleas, Lilacs, Forsythias, Oakleaf and Macrophylla Hydrangeas, Quince, and Viburnums.
- The following plants should be pruned in late winter or early spring before new growth begins: Roses, Annabelle and Panicle Hydrangeas, Crapemyrtles, Butterfly Bush, and Abielias.

## Evergreens

- For evergreen hedges or other types of plantings that may require sheering, the best time to prune/sheer is early summer after the new spring growth has hardened off. This prevents them from starting to grow again and requiring additional pruning to maintain shape.
- Most broadleaf evergreens will respond well to light pruning in mid to late November and December. These cuttings will then provide you with your own source of fresh cut holiday greens.
- Pine, Spruce, and Firs (needleless evergreens) generally require little if any pruning when placed in the landscape correctly. If pruning is needed, please consult a team member as very time specific pruning is required.

## Ornamental Grasses

- Most ornamental grasses can be cut back anytime from late November through mid-March. The exact time you cut these back is mostly determined by your personal taste. The dried grass blades and seed heads can be considered ornamental when kept through the winter.

## Groundcovers

- Liriope will remain evergreen most of the winter. It should be cut back in late winter, before new growth begins.
- Ivy, Vinca, and Pachysandra are not typically cut back outside of maintaining boundaries.

## Vines

- Each vine has specific pruning needs. Please consult a Team Member for instructions on if, when, and how to prune your hardy vine.

## Perennials

- Most non-evergreen perennials should be cut back annually in late fall or early winter.
- Some perennials are evergreen and others have seeds which are an important food source for birds during the winter.

*Pruning is both an art and a science. Scientifically there are correct ways to prune. This is often dictated by the type of plant. Improper pruning can be harmful to the plant and lead to other problems. Consult a Team Member for instructions on how to prune correctly.*