

Peter Beales®

World Leaders in Classic Roses

The Basics of Pruning Shrubs, Perennials and Climbing Plants



Pruning Shrubs, Perennials & Climbing Plants

- 3) Cultivation requirements & growing positions
- 3) Pests and diseases
- 4) Pruning Perennials
- 5) Pruning Shrubs & Climbers

Cultivation Requirements

Whole range of positions from shade to sun. Mostly well structured fertile soil, moist and well drained. However, many varieties can cope with very dry or very wet, acid or alkaline and poor, thin soils.

Virtually anything can be grown in tubs or container, even hanging baskets, not just open ground.

Growing Positions

- Climbers good for fences, walls, arches, obelisks, etc and can mix well with other subjects such as climbing roses.
- Shrubs form structure to borders with all year interest from leaves, stems and flowers. Many make excellent specimens.
- Perennials can fill spaces around shrubs or can be used to create unique borders. They create interest for most of the year from their flowers, which also provide a valuable food source for a variety of insects.

Pests and Diseases

Common problems for Perennials, Shrubs and Climbers can include

a) Pests

Mainly caterpillars, thrips, aphids, slugs and snails and vine weevils. Control by chemicals, traps or biological products such as nematodes.

b) Diseases

Mainly powdery mildew, botrytis, various leaf blotches, sudden oak death, root and stem rots.

c) Mineral Disorders

Various symptoms according to element. Can be corrected with appropriate feed.

Pruning Perennials

For the majority of Perennials you would simply cut down and clear spent flowering stems either in autumn or early spring, although there are a few exceptions and sometimes timings can be down to personal preference. An example of this would be some sturdy stemmed perennials, such as Sedums, where you may wish to leave the flower heads until spring to provide added interest over the winter. Another good example would be most perennial grasses, whose flower heads can add dramatic atmosphere to a garden within the winter months, before cutting right back to the base in spring in preparation for new growth. However this does not apply to Stipas, which merely require a hand running through them to rake out old, dead growth.

Perennials like Penstemons, Perovskias and Caryopteris should be pruned down to a good bud in spring to stimulate growth. Hardy Geraniums should also be cleared down to the crown, as this will then quickly generate fresh new growth within a month.

Generally Perennials just need a good tidy up as you see growth die back. Selected perennials can be pruned throughout the summer in order to encourage a second flush of flowers. This is commonly known as the 'Chelsea chop'. Plants that would benefit from deadheading in this way are Salvias, Geraniums and Heleniums.

Pruning Shrubs & Climbers

When first faced with the task of pruning Shrubs and Climbers it can seem like quite a daunting and confusing task, but once you start to understand the growing characteristics of the different Shrubs you have growing within your gardens, it should become easier over time to understand how each one needs to be pruned and the reasons why. Some might simply need a light prune to remove spent flowers if necessary or to shape the plant, whereas others may need regular hard pruning to encourage new vigorous growth to keep the plant healthy. The timing for pruning also varies and depends on flowering time, variety and placement.

To make it easier to gain an understanding of what Shrubs and Climbers require pruning and also when and how they should be pruned, they are divided into 13 different pruning groups. These 13 pruning groups are detailed below:

Group One

Evergreen and some deciduous shrubs flowering on previous or current year's growth. Tidy prune. Example varieties; Magnolia, Rhododendron, Azalea & Camellia.

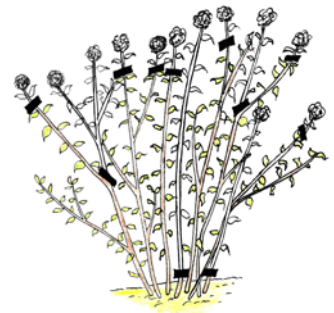


Group Two

Deciduous shrubs flowering in spring or early summer on previous year's growth. Cut back shoots that have flowered and remove one quarter of the oldest stems. Example varieties; Buddleja alternifolia, Deutzia, Forsythia & Philadelphus.

Group Three

Deciduous shrubs flowering spring or early summer on previous year's growth. New growth produced at or close to ground level. Once flowered should be cut back to near ground level. Example varieties; Kerria & Neillia.



Group Four

Deciduous shrubs flowering mid to late summer on previous year's growth. Trim off old flower heads and cut back the oldest stems by half their length. Example varieties; *Hydrangea macrophylla*

Group Five

Deciduous shrubs flowering late winter to early spring on previous year's growth. Hard prune close to base of the plant after flowering. Example varieties; *Prunus triloba*.



Group Six

Deciduous shrubs flowering mid to late summer or autumn on current season's growth. Prune all stems fairly hard early to mid-spring. Example varieties; *Buddleja davidii*, *Caryopteris* & *Fuchsia*.



Group Seven

Deciduous and some evergreen shrubs grown for attractive young stems or large leaves. Prune very hard late winter or early spring i.e. stooling. Example varieties; *Cornus*, *Cotinus*, *Rubus* & *Sambucus*.



Group Eight

Evergreen shrubs flowering winter to early summer. Best left unpruned but tidy weak or dead stems and remove spent flower heads/seedpods. Example varieties; *Rhododendron*, *Viburnum tinus* & *Box*.

Group Nine

Evergreen shrubs flowering summer & late autumn on previous or current season's growth. Tidy prune mid to late spring.

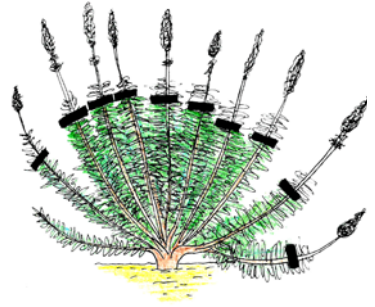
Example varieties; *Eucryphia*, *Prunus laurocerasus* & *Prunus lusitanica*.

Group Ten

Evergreen shrubs flowering on previous year's growth in spring or early summer, or on current season's growth in late summer and autumn.

Cut back flowered shoots to previous season's growth.

Example varieties; *Calluna*, *Erica* & *Lavandula*



Group Eleven

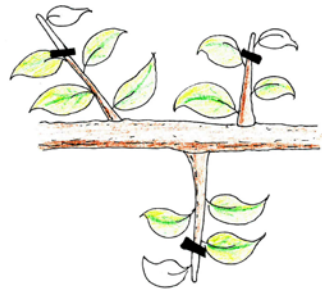
Vigorous climbers flowering on previous season's growth. Tidy prune to keep shape and within bound in late winter or early spring or after flowering.

Example varieties; *Trachelospermum*, *Lonicera*, *Akebia* & *Parthenocissus*

Group Twelve

Moderately vigorous climbers flowering on previous season's growth. Prune side shoots quite hard, thin out overcrowded stems late winter or early spring or just after flowering.

Example varieties; *Solanum crispum* & *Plumbago*



Group Thirteen

Wall trained deciduous and evergreen shrubs flowering on previous season's growth. Shorten side-shoots, remove wayward stems to keep shape and shrubs flat. Annually after flowering or late winter to early spring.

Example varieties; *Ceanothus*, *Chaenomoles* & *Garrya*.

For *Pyracantha* and *Cotoneaster*, cut back shoots during growing season and late winter.



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