Pruning Calendar

Shrubs:

Most pruning takes place because plants become too large for the planting space. Choosing plants by researching their mature size (rather than the size they are at planting) will help you avoid most pruning and plants will be more attractive and healthier. Use the following tables as a guideline to determine the right time to prune for many common shrubs. Most plants will do their best if allowed to grow to their natural form and shape. Shearing and excessive pruning compromises the vigor and health of the plant, reduces blooming, and may shorten the life of the plant. Remember: Every time you shear a plant, you create wounds, and expose the roots, branches and soil to the hot summer sun (requiring additional irrigation) and cold winter nights which places additional stress on the plant and making it vulnerable to disease and/or death.

Fall and Winter Pruning

Scientific Name	Common Name	Blooming Season	Pruning
Salvia chamaedryoides *S. clevelandii* *S. greggii*	Blue Sage Chaparral Sage Autumn Sage	Spring, or spring through summer.	Cut back old stems in winter or early spring. Deadhead spent flower stems.
Dalea bicolor *D. dorycnioides* *D. frutescens* *D. lutea*	Silver Dalea Black Dalea Yellow Bush Dalea	Fall blooming Fall to winter and spring Late summer and fall Late fall	Prune vigorous species by one third to one half during winter dormant period.
Caesalpinia pulcherrima *C. gilliesii* *C. mexicana*	Red Bird of Paradise Desert Bird of Paradise Mexican Bird of Paradise	Flowers from late spring to fall.	Major pruning in late winter, early spring. If stems are twiggy, cut *C. pulcherrima* to 6-12" above ground. Light midsummer pruning to control size.

February – March Pruning of Frost Damaged Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Blooming Season	Pruning
Bougainvillea sp.	Bougainvillea	Spring to fall flowering.	Prune dead wood or frost damage in early Feb.- March. Remove offshoots or vigorous growth as needed.
Lantana sp.	Lantana	Spring through fall.	Can be cut to ground in March to remove frost-damaged wood. Prune during growing season to control shape, if necessary.
Carissa grandiflora	Natal Plum	Flowers on new growth in early summer.	Prune dead wood or frost damage in early Feb.- March. Remove offshoots or vigorous growth as needed. **Avoid shearing**.
Justicia californica *J. spicigera*	Chuparosa Mexican honeysuckle	Spring blooming and intermittent during summer and fall.	Little to no pruning needed. Remove old woody stems to rejuvenate. Light pruning after spring if desired.

Spring Pruning

Scientific Name	Common Name	Blooming Season	Pruning
Calliandra californica *C. erioplylla*	Baja Red Fairy Duster Pink Fairy Duster	Spring to fall flowering.	Light, natural pruning (if needed) in late spring after first flowering.
Leucophyllum candidum *L. frutescens* *L. laevigatum*	'Silver Cloud' and 'Thunder Cloud' Texas Ranger Chihuahuan Sage	Summer and fall flowering	No pruning required if selected for the appropriate space. Selective pruning can be done in early spring. **Don't shear**.
Nerium oleander	Oleander	Flowers late spring to fall.	Thin in spring/early summer or after bloom, remove old wood. **Don't shear.**
Rosemarinus officinalis 'Prostrata'	Creeping Rosemary	Early spring flowering.	Prune after flowering in spring to control shape or cut back to woody stems to rejuvenate.
Tecoma stans	Yellow Trumpet Flower	Spring to fall flowering.	Prune dead wood in early spring, otherwise light pruning as needed.
Encelia farinosa	Brittle Bush	Spring flowering	From second year on, cut back to 6" after flowering.
Cassia artemisioides *C. nemophila* *C. phyllodenia*	Feathery Cassia Green Cassia Silvery Cassia	Flowers late winter to spring.	No pruning required if selected for the appropriate space. If necessary, prune after flowering while temperatures are still cool.

References

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General Guide When to Prune Trees / Shrubs

The following table provides optimal pruning times. Very light pruning can be done anytime if proper pruning techniques are followed. Remember to follow the tips for proper pruning and do not remove more than 25 percent annually.

Plant	When to Prune
Native trees	Early summer (May – early June)
Non-native deciduous trees	During winter dormancy (January)
Citrus	Don't prune except for hazards or health
Conifers (pines, junipers, cypress)	During winter dormancy (January)
Spring-blooming shrubs	After bloom is finished
Summer-blooming shrubs	During winter dormancy

General Pruning Tips for Other Plants

Scientific name	Common name	Pruning Tips
Agave sp. *Dasylirion wheeleri*	Agave Desert Spoon	Do not "pine-apple" prune. Pruning wounds often lead to pest infestations. Most Agave species will die after blooming.
Ocotillo	Fouquieria splendens	Do not prune. Plant in an area that will accommodate mature size.
Hesperaloe parviflora	Red or yellow yucca	Dried flower stalks can be removed. Do not shear.
Yucca sp.	Yucca	No pruning needed. Dry, old leaves leaves can be "peeled" on some species. Can remove old flower stalks after blooming. Do not shear.
Brahea armata *Chamaerops humilis* *Chamaerops linearis*	Palm	Cut dry or dead fronds. Do not top.
Opuntia sp.	Prickly Pear	Plant in an area that will accommodate mature size. If needed, make pruning cuts at the joints.