

## Pruning Guide for Commonly Used Shrubs

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 that stress the plant, requiring additional energy and water for the plant to recover.

### Fall and Winter Pruning

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Pruning
Chaparral Sage Autumn Sage Mexican Bush Sage	<i>Salvia. clevelandii</i> <i>S. greggii</i> <i>S. leucantha</i>	Spring, or spring through summer.	Cut back old stems in winter or early spring. Deadhead spent flower stems.
Silver Dalea Black Dalea Trailing Dalea Yellow Bush Dalea Bush Dalea	<i>Dalea bicolor</i> <i>D. frutescens</i> <i>D. greggii</i> <i>D. lutea</i> <i>D. pulchra</i>	Fall blooming Late summer and fall  Late fall	Prune vigorous species by renewal pruning of one third to one half during winter dormant period.
Red Bird of Paradise Desert Bird of Paradise Mexican Bird of Paradise	<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i> <i>C. gilliesii</i> <i>C. mexicana</i>	Flowers from late spring to fall.	If needed major renewal pruning is done in late winter, early spring. If stems are twiggy, cut <i>C. pulcherrima</i> to 6-12" above ground.
Pink Muhly Grass Deer Grass Mexican Thread Grass	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> <i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i> <i>Stipa tenuissima</i>	Flowers spikes occur fall through winter	Cut flat 6 inches from ground in late winter.

### Late February – March (Pruning of Frost Damaged Plants)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Pruning
Bougainvillea	<i>Bougainvillea sp.</i>	Spring to fall flowering.	Severe renewal pruning to remove dead wood or frost damage in early Feb.- March. Remove offshoots or vigorous growth as needed.
Lantana	<i>Lantana sp.</i>	Spring through fall.	Renewal pruning - Can be cut to ground in March to remove frost-damaged wood. Can prune during growing season to control shape, if necessary.
Natal Plum	<i>Carissa grandiflora</i>	Flowers on new growth in early summer.	Renewal pruning of dead wood or frost damage in early Feb.- March. Remove offshoots or vigorous growth as needed using 2-Step method. <b>Avoid shearing.</b>

Chuparosa Mexican Honeysuckle	<i>Justicia californica</i> <i>J. spicigera</i>	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.
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### Spring Pruning

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Pruning
Baja Fairy Duster Pink Fairy Duster	<i>Calliandra californica</i> <i>C. eriophylla</i>	Spring to fall flowering.	Light, 2-step pruning (if needed) in late spring after first flowering. Don't shear.
Violet Silverleaf (or "Cloud" series) Texas Sage Chihuahuan Sage	<i>Leucophyllum candidum</i>  <i>L. frutescens</i> <i>L. laevigatum</i>	Summer and fall flowering	No pruning required if selected for the appropriate space. 2-step pruning can be done in early spring. <b>Don't shear.</b>
Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Flowers late spring to fall.	2-step pruning in spring/early summer or after bloom, remove old wood. <b>Don't shear.</b>
Trailing Rosemary	<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i> 'Prostrata'	Early spring flowering.	Light pruning after flowering in spring to control shape or cut back to woody stems to rejuvenate.
Yellow Bells Orange Bells	<i>Tecoma stans</i> <i>Tecoma</i> hybrid	Spring to fall flowering.	Prune dead wood in early spring, otherwise light pruning as needed.
Brittlebush	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	Spring flowering	Trim tall flower stems down to leaves after flowering. Avoid over-watering which causes excessive growth.
Feathery Cassia Green Cassia Silvery Cassia	<i>Cassia artemisioides</i> <i>C. nemophila</i> <i>C. phyllodenia</i>	Flowers late winter to spring.	No pruning required if selected for the appropriate space. If necessary, 2-step prune after flowering while temperatures are still cool.

### References

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- Johnson, E.A. 1997. Pruning, Planting, and Care. Ironwood Press, Tucson, Arizona, ISBN 0-9638236-5-1
- Mielke, J. 1993. Native Plants for Southwestern Landscapes. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas., ISBN 0-292-75147-8

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## General Tips on 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 of the live branches and leaves annually.

Plant	When to Prune
Native trees	Early summer (May – early June)
Non-native deciduous trees	During winter dormancy (January)
Non-native Evergreen trees	March
Citrus	Don't prune except for hazards or health
Palm trees	June-flower stalks can be removed at this time too.
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

Common name	Scientific name	Pruning Tips
Agave	<i>Agave sp.</i>	Avoid all pruning. Pruning wounds often lead to pest infestations. Most Agave species will die after blooming. Do not “pineapple” prune
Ocotillo	<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>	Do not prune. Plant in an area that will accommodate mature size.
Red or yellow yucca	<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	Pruning is not recommended. Dried flower stalks can be removed. Do not shear.
Yucca	<i>Yucca sp.</i>	No pruning needed. Dry, old leaves can be “peeled” on some species. Can remove old flower stalks after blooming. Do not “pineapple prune”. Do not shear.
Desert Spoon	<i>Dasyllirion wheeleri</i>	
Mexican Blue Palm Mediterranean Fan Palm	<i>Brahea armata</i> <i>Chamaerops linearis</i>	Cut dry or dead fronds. Do not top.
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia sp.</i>	Plant in an area that will accommodate mature size. If needed, make pruning cuts at the joints.