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Your Indoor Outdoor guide to gardening

JUNE

PRUNING SPRING FLOWERING SHRUBS AND TREES

A “rule of thumb” for pruning is to prune spring flowering shrubs and trees as soon after they flower as possible. This will maximize the size and number of blossoms for next year since they develop during the summer.

Prune to maintain or improve the health and aesthetic value of the plants. Remove no more than one third of the total plant growth of any given plant in one year. Most plants will only need pruning every third year if then, so plan on 1/3 every third year. If you are not sure about removing or shortening any branches, think about the long term appearance of the plant. In pruning for aesthetic reasons it is often wiser to not prune if you are in doubt.

Pruning can take the form of heading back, thinning, or rejuvenation. Heading back is removing the end of a branch or bud points inward, the plant will become denser, outward and it will be more open. Thinning is a matter of removing an entire branch where it attaches to the main stem or at ground level for shrubs. Plants that tend to be too dense may need to be thinned. Only a few plants can tolerate rejuvenation pruning, which involves removing all old stems to the ground, or if few young ones are present, up to a third of the branches in each of three years.

Spring flowering shrubs that can be pruned immediately after flowering may need to be handled differently based on their growth habits. Thin Azalea, beautybush, Deutzia, flowering almond, heath Kerria, Lilac on an annual basis. Enkianthus and fringetree may only need a slight thinning every other year. Firethorn should be headed back. Very prolific plants will need to be thinned and headed back on a yearly to maintain their best form. Among these vigorous growers are Forsythia, mock orange, spicebush and sweet shrub.

The spring flowering trees will generally require minimal or no pruning. Again, prune first and foremost to maintain the health of the tree. Up to the “1/3 rule,” prune out crossing branches suckers, and if needed thin out the interior to open up the canopy. Where branches are very crowded, some thinning out may be advisable, but most major pruning to ornamental trees will occur shortly after they are planted to establish the plants structure.

By Linda Wiles, Penn State Extension Agent

FLOWERING THIS MONTH

(Sample: not a complete listing)

- ❖ Annuals: Impatiens, marigolds, petunia, snapdragon, Zinnia, etc. (this is prime-time for annuals)
- ❖ Perennials: Amsonia, Anchusa, Baptisia, Chrysanthemum, columbines, Delphinium, Dianthus, flax, foxgloves, Geranium, irises, lady's mantle, lavender, lilies, peonies, pinks, Queen-of-the-prairie, Salvia, Veronica.
- ❖ Bulbs: lily of the valley, tuberous begonias.
- ❖ Shrubs: beauty bush, butterfly bush, Deutzia, holly, Leucothoe, mock orange, mountain laurel, roses.
- ❖ Trees: Chinese dogwood, fringe tree, golden-rain tree, hawthorn, tulip tree, Viburnum.

- ❖ Wildflowers: baneberry, bee balm, Black-eyed Susan, bleeding heart, bluebead lily, bluebell, blue-eyed grass, butterfly weed, evening primrose, foamflower, Indian paintbrush, lupine, milkweed, obedient plant, Penstemon, wild iris.

HOUSEPLANTS

- ❖ Provide more frequent watering and fertilization as the plants add summer growth.
- ❖ Some houseplants can be successfully moved outdoors in shady areas for the summer.
- ❖ Repot plants if needed, in pots one inch larger than their current pots. Some plants such as spider plants and amaryllis prefer to stay under potted.
- ❖ This is an excellent time to take cuttings of house and garden plants propagate them for even more plants for your garden or for friends

BULBS

- ❖ Remove flowers after they fade.
- ❖ After the tops have died down from your spring bulbs, they can be dug, divided and replanted. Do not remove the leaves until they have turned yellow or brown.

COMPOST

- ❖ Keep the compost pile turned.
- ❖ Add moisture as needed: keep as moist as a wrung out sponge.
- ❖ Continue adding garden waste from weed seedlings, kitchen trimmings, and garden clean-up.

VEGETABLE GARDENS

- ❖ Heat tolerant vegetables of beans, chard, and cucumber can continue to be sown.
- ❖ Watch out for bugs on squash, they will appear on the underside of the leaves.
- ❖ Complete setting out the initial plants of tomatoes, and other warm season transplants – eggplant, pepper, cantaloupe and watermelon.
- ❖ Any remaining garden peas will be turning yellow due to heat.
- ❖ Harvest any remaining cool-weather crops, including lettuce, radishes, carrots, scallions, and asparagus.
- ❖ Fertilize vegetables (transplants moved outside) 6-8 weeks after they were sown.
- ❖ Be aware of the flea beetles eating small holes in flower and vegetable seedlings.

TREE FRUITS & SMALL FRUITS

- ❖ Rub or pull off new suckers and water sprouts on fruit trees.
- ❖ Your fruit trees will naturally shed excess fruit at this time. Ideally fruit should be at about 6-8" apart on the stem. Closer than this can cause damage to the tree.
- ❖ Pick strawberries early in the day. Do not wash the berries until immediately before using them. Excessive rainfall will dilute the flavor of strawberries and make them more susceptible to plant diseases.
- ❖ Remove strawberry (June-bearing) beds after they have finished production for the year. Fertilize and water to promote new growth for next year's crop.
- ❖ It is important to keep a record of the varieties of fruits that you grow. It will help to avoid ones that you don't like and plant more of ones that are especially good.
- ❖ Pinch back growing tips on black and purple raspberries and blackberries.

HERBS

- ❖ Basil and dill make excellent warm weather additions to a summer garden.
- ❖ Pinch herbs to make plants bushier and stimulate more growth.

LAWNS

- ❖ Leave nitrogen-rich clippings on the lawn.
- ❖ Maintain your mower by sharpening the blade at least monthly, or before the grass starts looking torn when cut, and check the engine oil.
- ❖ Water deeply if there is less than one inch of rain a week. Deep, but infrequent watering of established lawns will help to avoid drought stress and disease problems. Newly sodded lawns will need a thorough daily watering until the roots enter the underlying soil.
- ❖ Spot treat for broadleaf weed problems such as dandelions or ground-ivy.

PERENNIALS, BIENNIALS & ANNUALS

- ❖ Continue pinching chrysanthemums to make them full throughout June.
- ❖ Deadhead peonies after they flower.
- ❖ Finish planting of annuals.
- ❖ Bring in the outdoors by cutting some flowers from your garden to enjoy inside.
- ❖ Watch out for spider mites on ornamental plants indoors and out.

TREES & SHRUBS

- ❖ Replace disintegrated mulch; mulch should be spread beginning 3-4" away from the base of the plants and extent at least to the drip line (right below the end of the longest branch); apply 3-4" deep.
- ❖ Pesticide sprays from liquid concentrates tend to more easily damage sensitive trees, shrubs and flowers than those from wettable powders.
- ❖ Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs.
- ❖ Fertilize summer flowering trees and shrubs.
- ❖ Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered deeply every 7-10 days when there is less than an inch of rain in that period.
- ❖ Check for insect and disease problems to catch any problems while they can be more easily controlled.

ROSES

- ❖ Start deadheading roses to encourage re-bloom and improve plant health.
- ❖ Fertilize with a granular balanced fertilizer.
- ❖ If applying pesticides, do so in the coolest part of the day to avoid burning plant tissues. Fungicide can be applied to prevent and control black spot on roses.

WATER GARDENS

- ❖ Plant water-lilies or other aquatic plants.
- ❖ Apply balanced slow-release fertilizer.