

Pruning for Better Plants and Blooms

I know that it's too early for pruning, but it is not too early to start planning your attack. No pain, no gain. Certain trees, shrubs, and vines should be pruned on a yearly or semiannual basis.

Wisteria, for example, will rarely bloom profusely unless it is pruned heavily at least every second year. Wisteria blooms on old wood so make sure that when you prune you leave some of the old wood. Smoke Bush grows very quickly, but if left to grow on its own it will become very leggy and will take much longer to leaf out. Nine Bark (*Physocarpus*), Spirea and Butterfly Bush (*Budlia*) will perform much nicer when pruned heavily on a regular basis.

The best time for pruning is December – March on a clear dry day. Never prune on wet days, as it will spread fungal spores or diseases from plant to plant. Always remember to use a disinfectant on your pruning tools between plants.