Virginia Cooperative Extension

A Guide to Successful Pruning
Shrub Pruning Calendar

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Comments:

1.) Flowers are produced on new (current season) wood
2.) Flowers are produced on wood from past season, pruning while dormant will reduce flowers
3.) Make pruning cuts well below diseased wood (fire blight) – disinfect shears between cuts
4.) Remove old stems to ground yearly to renew
5.) Midseason shear if a formal hedge is desired
6.) Do not cut into old wood that has no leaves or needles
7.) Spring/summer prune to remove azalea caterpillars and galls
8.) Fall/early winter pruning can reduce winter hardiness
9.) Snap candles (new growth) in half when needles are 1/2 to 2/3 their normal mature length

🌿 = Best time to prune

⬛ = Do not prune except to correct damage, hazards or structural defects

Where no 🌿 or ⬛ timing is not critical

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Comments
Abelia	🌿	🌿									🌿	🌿	1,4
Almond, Flowering					🌿	🌿	🌿						2,4
Arborvitae	🌿	🌿	🌿			🌿	🌿				🌿	🌿	6
Aucuba						🌿	🌿						2
Azalea, Deciduous					🌿	🌿	🌿						2
Azalea, Evergreen					🌿	🌿	🌿						2,7
Barberry, Deciduous					🌿	🌿	🌿						2,4
Barberry, Evergreen					🌿	🌿	🌿						2,4
Bayberry			🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿							
Beautyberry	🌿	🌿	🌿								🌿	🌿	1
Beautybush													
(Kolkwitzia)						🌿	🌿						2,4
Boxwood	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿	🌿				🌿	🌿	5
Broom (Cytisus)						🌿	🌿						2

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	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Comments
Butterfly-bush	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿	1
Camellia, Japanese				✿	✿	✿							2
Camellia, Sasanqua			✿	✿	✿								1
Chastetree (Vitex)	✿	✿	✿										1
Cherrylaurel (Prunus)	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿				✿	✿	5
Clethra, Summersweet	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿	1
Cotoneaster, Deciduous	✿	✿									✿	✿	3
Cotoneaster, Evergreen	✿	✿									✿	✿	3
Crape Myrtle	✿	✿	✿										1,8
Daphne, Fragrant or Winter				✿	✿	✿	✿						2
Deutzia						✿	✿						2,4
Dogwood, Redtwig	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿	1,4
Eleagnus, Thorny	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿				✿	✿	
Euonymus, Deciduous	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿	
Euonymus, Evergreen	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿	✿				✿	✿	5
Forsythia				✿	✿	✿	✿						2,4
Fothergilla					✿	✿	✿						2
Gardenia	✿	✿									✿	✿	1
Harry LauderÕs Walking Stick					✿	✿	✿						2
Hibiscus, Rose-of-Sharon, Althea	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿	1
Holly, Deciduous	✿	✿										✿	1
Holly, Evergreen						✿	✿						2,5
Honeysuckle					✿	✿	✿						2,4,5
Hydrangea, Spring-blooming						✿	✿						2
Hydrangea, Summer-blooming	✿	✿	✿										1
Hypericum, St. Johnswort	✿	✿	✿										1
Indian Hawthorn (Raphiolepis)					✿	✿	✿						2
Jasmine, Winter				✿	✿	✿	✿						2
Juniper	✿	✿	✿								✿	✿	6
Kerria (Globeflower)						✿	✿						2,4
Leucothoe						✿	✿						4
Lilac						✿	✿						2,4
Mahonia, Oregon Grapeholly					✿	✿	✿						2,4
Mockorange						✿	✿						2,4

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Comments
Mountain-laurel (Kalmia)						✂	✂						2
Nandina	✂	✂	✂										1,4
Osmanthus, Holly	✂	✂				✂					✂	✂	1,5
Pearlbush						✂	✂						2
Photinia	✂	✂			✂	✂	✂				✂	✂	5
Pieris					✂	✂	✂						2
Pine, Mugo	✂			✂	✂	✂						✂	9
Pittosporum		✂	✂	✂	✂								
Privet, Deciduous (Ligustrum)	✂	✂	✂	✂	✂	✂	✂				✂	✂	5
Privet, Evergreen (Ligustrum)	✂	✂	✂	✂	✂	✂	✂				✂	✂	5
Potentilla	✂	✂	✂							✂	✂	✂	1,4
Pyracantha						✂	✂						2,3
Quince				✂	✂	✂	✂						2,4
Rhododendron						✂	✂						2
Rose		✂	✂				✂	✂					1,3,4
Serviceberry				✂	✂	✂							
Smoke Tree	✂	✂									✂	✂	1
Spirea, Springblooming					✂	✂							2
Spirea, Summerblooming	✂	✂											1
Sumac	✂	✂	✂					✂	✂	✂	✂	✂	1,4
Sweetshrub, Carolina Allspice							✂	✂					1
Viburnum, Decid.					✂	✂	✂						2,4
Viburnum, Evergr.					✂	✂							2
Weigela					✂	✂	✂						2,4
Willow, Pussy				✂	✂	✂	✂						2
Witchhazel				✂	✂	✂	✂						2
Yew	✂	✂	✂		✂	✂	✂				✂	✂	5

Exceptions:

1.) Timing varies across USDA climate zones - zones within Virginia range from 8a in the Virginia Beach area to 5b along the West Virginia border

2.) Prune anytime to correct vandalism damage and hazards created by equipment or weather

3.) Hedges maintained formally (tight shapes) require more pruning than hedges maintained informally (in their natural form)