



522 Ann St PIQUA  
937.773.3081

2310 W St Rt 55 TROY  
937.335.5550

SPRING

## Pruning

[www.andysgarden.com](http://www.andysgarden.com)

For gardeners who experience hard winters, fall is a great time to get a head start on garden clean-up. We hear a lot about four seasons of interest in the garden, but this rarely applies to perennial plants. Most perennials turn ugly as the temperatures drop. However there are a few that remain evergreen, especially in milder areas. These can be left standing for interest as well as to fuel the vigor of the plant. And there are perennials that simply don't fare well if they are pruned too late in the season. The following list is a recommendation of plants that are best pruned in spring. There will, of course, be exceptions. Any plant that is diseased, infested, or otherwise in poor condition, should be pruned in the fall. Consider this listing as a guideline. You will learn what works and what doesn't, for your own garden.

### Suggested Perennial Plants to Prune in the Spring

**Artemisia** Most Artemisia don't like being pruned in the fall. The growth that results is too tender to survive the winter and the dieback is often enough to kill the whole plant. Clean in early spring.

**Asters** Fall blooming asters have generally been pinched and forced several times throughout the growing season. Once they are finally allowed to bloom, they appreciate being left alone to recuperate, until spring. Several bloom so late into the fall, the question of fall clean-up becomes moot.

**Astilbe** Astilbe don't require much maintenance. Fall clean-up is unnecessary and may weaken the plant's tolerance for cold. Minimal spring clean-up is required.

**Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)** Although not particularly attractive in winter, the seed heads will feed the birds.

**Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*)** To lessen winter kill, wait for signs of green at the base and then cut back to 6 - 10 inches.

**Campanula** Most campanulas get sheared back at some point during the summer, to clean up ugly or damaged foliage and encourage another flush of blooming. Fresh basal foliage will result and should be left through winter, so as not to encourage more tender growth in the fall.

**Coral Bells (*Heuchera*)** Heuchera are prone to heaving in soils that freeze and thaw. Leaving the foliage in tact helps to mulch the plants through winter.

**Delphinium** If you're lucky enough to grow Delphiniums as perennials, remove the flower stalks, but allow the foliage to remain until spring.

**Dianthus** Most Dianthus can remain somewhat evergreen throughout the winter and nothing is gained by cutting back in the fall. They will still need some clean-up in the spring.

**Geum** Geum can remain semi-evergreen throughout winter, so no fall pruning is necessary, especially if you've been deadheading and cleaning up dead leaves during the growing season.

**Hosta** Although Hosta foliage gets ugly over winter, some Hosta varieties can be damaged by spring frosts and benefit from the protection of the collapsed foliage.

**Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*)** When a plant is bred from a common weed, you can usually assume that it doesn't need much care to survive. Joe-Pye will bloom well into the fall and then produce fluffy seed heads. You can cut it back if you choose, but it's not necessary to the plant's survival.

**Lamb's Ear (*Stachys byzantina*)** There's no point in trying to clean up Lamb's Ear for the winter. Let it be and remove winter damage when the leaves perk up in the spring.

**Lavender (*Lavandula*)** Many areas have a hard time over-wintering lavender. The problem is more often moisture than cold, but cold is a factor. Don't prune lavender late in the season, as new growth is extremely cold sensitive. Wait until new growth appears in the spring before removing winter die back.

**Lupine (*Lupinus*)** Lupines are temperamental, short-lived perennials and they do not enjoy winter. Leave the foliage on for protection and hope for the best come spring.

**Mums (*Chrysanthemum*)** Leave the foliage in tact to protect the plant's crown. All the better to let the flowers bloom well into the fall.

**Purple Coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*)** Coneflowers don't look terribly attractive in winter, but they do attract and feed birds. If you'd like both birds and aesthetics, you can always prune your coneflowers in July and get squat, sturdy plants that will provide seed and remain standing.

**Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)** Like its cousin Lavender, Perovskia doesn't like to be trimmed back in that fall, because it's tender growth is too sensitive to cold. Wait until new growth appears in the spring and then cut back to about 6 - 8". If the only new growth is from the base of the plant, the entire top woody section has died back and it can be pruned to the ground.

Making the world beautiful  
One flower at a time

