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Perennials - Plants to Prune in the Fall

Bearded Iris - The tall foliage of Bearded Iris begins flopping early in the season. By fall, its cover for Iris borders and fungal diseases. Cut back after a killing frost and it would be wise to dispose of the foliage, rather than composting it.

Beebalm - Even the most resistant varieties of Monarda can succumb to mildew. When that happens, you'll be cutting them back long before fall. Fresh, new growth can be left on until Spring. Sometimes selective thinning of stems is all that is needed and you can leave the remaining seed heads for the birds.

Blanket Flower - Gaillardia is a pretty hardy plant, but cutting back the spent stems seems to improve its hardiness even more, by improving its vigor.

Columbine - Remove any foliage showing leaf miner damage and remove any debris around the base of the plants. Aquilegia send out growth early in spring and appreciate not having the old foliage to contend with.

Daylily - Daylilies respond well to shearing and unless you are in an area where they remain somewhat evergreen, fall pruning will save you a messy cleanup in the spring.

Peony - Peonies need a period of cold to set buds for the following season. That coupled with the fact that their foliage is extremely prone to mildew is reason enough to remove the foliage in the fall. Infected foliage can be removed and disposed of in late summer. Healthy foliage will turn golden in fall and can be removed once it has turned to mush, after the first frost.

Phlox - Phlox is prone toward powdery mildew. Even the resistant varieties can become infected in bad weather. If so, prune and destroy all foliage and stems in the fall.

Salvia - Perennial Salvia benefits from several prunings during the growing season. In fall when blooming slows, cu the whole plant back to the new basal growth.

Wild Indigo - Baptisia is one of those plants that splits in the middle if not sheared back after pruning, however many gardeners like the seed pods and simply stake the plants. Come frost, the foliage turns black and even staking isn't going to help its appearance. Cut back for aesthetics.