

Frequently Asked Questions

Shrubs, Trees & Roses

Q. When should I prune spring flowering shrubs?

A. Since these plants bloom on previous year's wood, they should be pruned after they bloom or else you will sacrifice the buds. Pruning should be done within six weeks after blooming, which is also a good time to feed them. We recommend Tomorite, a high phosphorous formula that will promote flowering.

Q. When should I prune summer flowering shrubs and trees?

A. These plants should be pruned in the early spring before new growth begins to emerge. Bigleaf, Oakleaf and climbing Hydrangeas are an exception to this rule. They are late spring or summer flowering, but they bloom from the previous year's growth, so they should be pruned only if necessary and after flowering.

Q. When should I prune evergreens?

A. Most evergreen trees and shrubs should be pruned either in the early spring (*for a natural appearance*) or late spring after the new growth has flushed out (*for a more formal appearance*). This includes both needled evergreens such as yews, spruce and juniper and broad-leaved evergreens such as boxwood, holly and laurel.

One notable exception to this rule is the spring flowering group of evergreens such as azalea and rhododendron, which should not be pruned until after they have bloomed or else you will sacrifice the flowers. These plants should be pruned within six weeks after they bloom, as this is when they begin to set buds for the following year's bloom.

Q. When should I prune bush roses?

A. Major pruning on roses should be done in March by cutting the stems back to around 6 inches (15cm). It is recommended pruning roses down by half in the autumn, mainly to tidy them up but it is best to leave some length to the branches in case of a severe winter as you may get some die back.

Q. Should shrubs and trees be watered after they are planted?

A. Yes. All plants should be watered thoroughly after they are planted and then as needed to keep them healthy. How often you water may vary depending on factors such as size of the plant, where it is growing and how much natural rainfall we receive.

You will need to monitor your plants water requirements by checking the moisture level of smaller plants every 2-3 days and larger plants and trees every 3-4 days to determine how dry or wet it is to know when it is time to water again.

Q. Why are the leaves on my azaleas (or other broadleaf evergreens) turning yellow, while the veins inside the leaf are dark green?

A. This condition could be caused by an iron deficiency in the plant, often brought about as a result of the pH level of the soil being too high or too low for the plant. If this is the case, you can apply iron to the plant and then check the soil pH to see if it needs addressing.

Q. What are the black spots on my rose bushes?

A. This is a disease called 'black spot'. It is a common and disfiguring disease of roses. Fungicides are more effective when applied as a preventative disease control and we suggest alternating between different fungicides to reduce any chance of disease resistance.

Roses will need to be sprayed once every 2-3 weeks from May through to September to keep black spot and other possible problems under control.

Q. My hydrangea is losing its blue colouring, what can I do?

A. Use 'Hydrangea Colourant' or apply an ericaceous feed to the plant which will help it keep the blue colour. If one isn't used the hydrangea will eventually revert back to pink.