



In the fall, it's important to properly prepare your garden and landscape for the winter months. Many plants and shrubs benefit from a little pruning and maintenance in the fall, but not all of them should be cut back at this time.

The specific plants and shrubs to prune or cut back in the fall can vary depending on your climate zone and the individual needs of your plants. However, here are some general guidelines.

## Plants and shrubs to consider cutting back in the fall

**Deciduous trees:** Fall is a good time to prune deciduous trees, as their leaves have fallen, and their structure is more visible. Prune away any dead or diseased branches and any that are crossing or rubbing against each other.

**Perennials:** Many herbaceous perennials can be cut back in the fall after they have gone dormant. This helps tidy up the garden and prevents disease from overwintering. Be sure to leave some growth at the base to protect the plant during the winter.

**Ornamental grasses:** Trim ornamental grasses back in the fall to about 6-8 inches above the ground. This not only improves the appearance of your garden but also helps prevent the grasses from flopping over under the weight of snow.

**Hydrangeas:** The best time to prune hydrangeas depends on the variety. Some should be pruned in the fall (e.g., smooth hydrangeas), while others are better pruned in late winter or early spring (e.g., panicle and oakleaf hydrangeas). Be sure to know the specific type you have.

**Rose bushes:** Remove any dead or diseased canes and cut back the healthy ones to reduce their height by about one-third. This helps protect them from winter damage.

**Some fruit trees:** Some fruit trees, like apple and pear trees, benefit from pruning in late fall or winter when they are dormant. Prune away dead, damaged, or crossing branches.

**Spring-flowering shrubs:** Shrubs that bloom in the spring, such as forsythia and lilacs, are generally pruned right after they finish flowering in the spring, not in the fall. Pruning them in the fall can reduce the number of blossoms in the spring.

***Before pruning any plant or shrub, it's essential to research its specific needs and the best time for pruning in your region, as timing can vary based on climate and local conditions. Pruning should be done with clean, sharp tools to make clean cuts and minimize stress on the plants.***

## **Plants and shrubs to avoid cutting back in the fall:**

**Evergreen trees and shrubs:** It's usually best to avoid heavy pruning of evergreens in the fall. Pruning can stimulate new growth, which may not have time to harden off before winter, making the plant more susceptible to winter damage.

**Late-blooming perennials:** Late-blooming perennials, such as asters and mums, should be left alone until the spring when they have finished flowering.

**Lavender and other semi-evergreen herbs:** These plants should be pruned in the spring rather than the fall.

**Tender or marginally hardy plants:** In regions with cold winters, it's best to leave tender or marginally hardy plants alone in the fall, as they may benefit from the extra growth to protect them from winter cold.