



# SPRING PRUNING



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**S**PRING IS ON ITS WAY, AND AS THE TEMPERATURES INCREASE AND THE DAYS LENGTHEN THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE IN THE GARDEN.

Start by removing seed heads and stems that were left over for decorative purposes or as winter habitat. Clear the last of the leaves and give the lawn a good rake to get rid of the detritus that has gathered over the winter months.

Now it's time for Spring pruning. Not everyone feels confident about this so here's a brief guide covering the pruning of shrubs and plants. Pruning trees is a more complex subject and because of this and the heights involved, I would suggest seeking the advice of a well recommended arborist (tree surgeon) to help you tackle this.

## LET'S START WITH WHEN NOT TO PRUNE SHRUBS AND PLANTS:

Not when the soil is sodden after rain; standing on the surrounding soil in these conditions will result in compacting it and therefore preventing moisture from penetrating the roots, and not when there is frost on the ground or forecast of icy winds.

## SO WHEN SHOULD YOU PRUNE?

At a time that has allowed the maximum period for the development and ripening of new growth before winter.

Flowering plants that carry their flowers on wood formed in the previous year should be pruned as soon as the flowers have faded.

Flowering plants that carry their flowers on wood formed in the current year, from early spring onwards and have the months until flowering begins in which to ripen their growth, can be pruned at the end of the winter, unless there are severe frosts forecast.

For how to prune I would suggest a book called *The Pruner's Handbook*, this contains practical advice with good diagrams on how to prune almost everything! It's by John Malins and the ISBN is 0 7153 0399 6 but a good starting point for pruning any plant is to remove dead, diseased or damaged stems.



So now you have all the plants, shrubs and trees tidied up and looking good, it's time to plan what to plant this year. The colour palette for 2018 features colours naturally found in lush vegetation and woodland such as berry-infused purple, red wood, eggshell blue and green foliage.

Accent colours can be introduced through clay pots with purple flowering herbs such as lavender, rosemary and Thai basil, or how about sanding down some wooden occasional tables or chairs, and splashing on a coat of eggshell blue paint to compliment the shades of your new plants? However you apply colour the key is to make it sit naturally within the space rather than trying to force it, so if it works easily do it but if you are struggling with it or it is struggling with you, just let it be; the plants will do it for you all by themselves!