

# Pruning and Preparing for Spring

Since pruning is a very broad subject, the Martha's Bloomer's staff will address some aspects of getting your shrubs and perennials ready for spring. We are mainly going to discuss the more popular plants, but many of these instructions can apply to others not mentioned.

January and February are great months to spend some time getting ready for the rush of spring. Besides pruning and general cleaning it also time to divide or move plants that didn't work where they were planted last summer. Did your lantana or salvia get so large that they shaded the cute little annuals you had counted on for color? Did the ornamental grass that was to be an accent get 9 feet tall? Now is the time to dig up the plant in question and replace it with a more suitable plant. Or perhaps a plant looked spindly and didn't grow much at all. How much sun did it get? Maybe too much or too little, but now it could be moved rather than just exist another season. Don't forget to pull up those old annuals that are making the bed messy and add compost to those areas before replanting.

As you clean and prune it is time to re-mulch and possibly add a layer of compost. Perennials and shrubs do not need fertilizing at this time—that should be done in late February. But if the bed is looking hard packed and roots are very close to the surface, an inch or two of compost and a 4" inch layer of mulch will do wonders and make your beds come to life in the spring. In late February you will want to use a good tree and shrub food with the ratio of about 3-1-2. After mulching and composting for several seasons, fertilizing requirements will be minimal. Water requirements will also be less and that is good for several reasons—economy, conservation and less poor quality water for plants to tolerate.

## **Pruning:**

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|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| 1. Vitex     | 3. Buddlei | 5. Pittosporum | 7. Nandina |
| 2. Elaeagnus | 4. Cleyera | 6. Esperanza   |            |

## **Pruning:**

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|-----------------|--------|
| 1. Crape Myrtle | 2. Elm |
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## **Pruning or Dividing:**

1. Salvia greggii: Shear to increase bloom and give shape when new growth appears in late winter.
2. Ruellia: Cut back to ground in late winter.
3. Hardy Hibiscus: Cut back to green wood now.
4. Mum pacificum: Cut back now and again as they put out.
5. Iris pseudacorus: Will grow in damp conditions. Divide only when crowded and plant immediately in well-prepared soil.

