



Sun City West PRIDES
Pruning and Fertilizing Guide
 Commonly Used Shrubs, Trees, and Other Desert Plants

Use the following tables as a guideline to determine the right time to prune for many common shrubs. Most plants will do their best if allowed to grow to their natural form and shape. Shearing and excessive pruning compromises the vigor and health of the plant, reduces blooming, and may shorten the life of the plant. Remember: Every time you shear a plant, you create wounds that stress the plant, requiring additional energy and water for the plant to recover.

Allow the plant to grow in its natural shape.

Rules of Thumb: Only Prune after flowering and prune to remove disease or damage. Rejuvenate/restorative pruning can be done according to the guide below. Not all plants will respond well to severe pruning.

Plants to Prune Fall and Winter

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Fall Pruning	Fertilizing	Restoration/ Rejuvenation
Chaparral Sage Autumn Sage Mexican Bush Sage	<i>Salvia. clevelandii</i> <i>S. greggii</i> <i>S. leucantha</i>	Spring, or spring through summer.	Cut back old stems in winter or early spring. Deadhead spent flower stems.	Not needed, or once per year, Spring	Late spring cut to base
Silver Dalea Black Dalea Trailing Dalea Yellow Bush Dalea Bush Dalea	<i>Dalea bicolor</i> <i>D. frutescens</i> <i>D. greggii</i> <i>D. lutea</i> <i>D. pulchra</i>	Late summer and fall	Prune vigorous species by renewal pruning of one third to one half during winter dormant period.	Do not fertilize	Late winter or early spring cut to 6” to 8”

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Fall Pruning	Fertilizing	Restoration/ Rejuvenation
Mexican Bird of Paradise	<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i> <i>C. gilliesii</i> <i>C. mexicana</i>	Flowers from late spring to fall.	If twiggy can prune in winter	Spring and Fall	Late winter or early spring cut to 6" to 12"
Pink Muhly Grass Deer Grass Mexican Thread Grass	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> <i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i> <i>Stipa tenuissima</i>	Flowers spikes occur fall through winter	No pruning during growing season.	Not needed or once per year if you want excessive growth	Cut flat 6 inches from ground in late winter.

Plants to Prune in Late February - March

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Late February -March Pruning	Fertilization	Restoration/ Rejuvenation
Bougainvillea	<i>Bougainvillea sp.</i>	Spring to fall flowering.	Severe renewal pruning to remove dead wood or frost damage in early Feb.- March. Remove offshoots or vigorous growth as needed.	Yes, spring through mid-summer	Late winter cut to 6” to 8”
Lantana	<i>Lantana sp.</i>	Spring through fall.	Can prune during growing season to control shape, if necessary.	Yes, spring through mid-summer	Late spring can be cut to ground
Little John Bottlebrush	<i>Callistemon Citrinus</i>	Spring to summer	Prune before spring growth	Annually, in Spring	Late February selective reduction
Natal Plum	<i>Carissa grandiflora</i>	Flowers on new growth in early summer.	Remove offshoots or vigorous growth as needed using 2-Step method. Avoid shearing.	Light feeding early spring	Renewal pruning of dead wood or frost damage in early Feb.- March.
Chuparosa Mexican Honeysuckle	<i>Justicia californica J. spicigera</i>	Spring blooming and intermittent during summer and fall.	Little to no pruning needed. Remove old woody stems to rejuvenate. Light pruning after late winter if desired.	Once a year, late winter	Late spring cut to ground Late fall or late spring cut to ground

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Late February -March Pruning	Fertilization	Restoration/ Rejuvenation
Desert Ruellia	<i>Ruellia peninsularis</i>	Spring through fall	No pruning necessary.	Yes, spring and summer	Cut back 6"-8" to rejuvenate
Chaste Tree/vitex	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	Late spring to early fall	Selective thinning annually for tree form and to promote branching	mid -spring	Cut back to 8"-12" to restore
Turpentine Bush	<i>Ericameria larioifolla</i>	Late summer to fall	No pruning needed	Do not fertilize	Cut back to 4-6" to restore



Plants to Prune in Spring

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Spring Pruning	Fertilization	Restoration/ Rejuvenation
Baja Fairy Duster Pink Fairy Duster	<i>Calliandra californica</i> <i>C. erioplylla</i>	Spring to fall flowering.	Light, 2-step pruning (if needed) in late spring after first flowering. Don't shear.	Annually, late winter or late spring	Late spring cut to 6"-8"
Bush Morning Glory	<i>Convolvulus oneorum</i>	Spring	Late spring	Do not fertilize	Cut back to half its size
Emu - Valentine, Cupid, etc.	<i>Eremophila maculata</i>	Late winter to spring	March	Annually, after pruning in March	Cut back to 6-8" if needed
Germander	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>	Pale pink winter to spring	Late spring, fall or winter cut stems back to base	Annually in Spring	NA
Jobba	<i>Simmondsia chinensis</i>	Spring, not showy	Late spring or late fall cut back to 12"	Do not fertilize	NA
Violet Silverleaf (or "Cloud" series) Texas Sage Chihuahuan Sage	<i>Leucophyllum candidum</i> <i>L. frutescens</i> <i>L. laevigatum</i>	Summer and fall flowering	No pruning required if selected for the appropriate space. 2- step pruning can be done in early spring. Don't shear.	Not needed, once per year, Spring	Late fall, after flowering, cut back to 12"
Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Flowers late spring to fall.	2-step pruning in spring/early summer or after bloom, remove old wood. Don't shear.	Do not fertilize	Late spring cut back to 6" to 8"

Common Name	Scientific Name	Blooming Season	Spring Pruning	Fertilization	Restoration/ Rejuvenation
Trailing Rosemary	<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i> 'Prostrata'	Early spring flowering.	Light pruning after flowering in spring to control shape or cut back to woody stems to rejuvenate.	Not needed or Annually in spring	Light pruning of tips over time, do not cut back severely
Yellow Bells Orange Bells	<i>Tecoma stans</i> <i>Tecoma</i> hybrid	Spring to fall flowering.	Prune dead wood in late winter/ early spring, otherwise light pruning as needed.	Not needed or Annually in summer	Late winter early spring cut back to 6" to 8"
Brittlebush	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	Spring flowering	Trim tall flower stems down to leaves after flowering. Avoid over-watering which causes excessive growth.	No fertilizer needed	Late spring cut to ground
Feathery Cassia Green Cassia Silvery Cassia	<i>Cassia artemisioides</i> <i>C. nemophila</i> <i>C. phyllodenia</i>	Flowers late winter to spring.	No pruning required if selected for the appropriate space. If necessary, 2-step prune after flowering while temperatures are still cool.	No fertilizer, however, may need to lower pH	

Tree Pruning

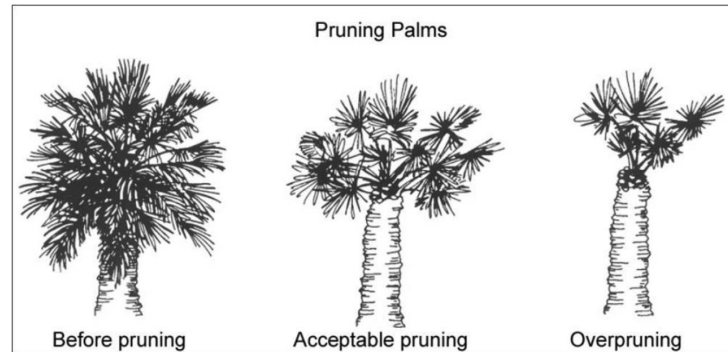
The following table provides optimal pruning times. Very light pruning can be done anytime if proper pruning techniques are followed. Remember to follow the tips for proper pruning and do not remove more than 25 percent of the live branches and leaves annually.

Tree	When to Prune
Native trees	Early summer (May - early June)
Non-native deciduous trees	During winter dormancy (January)
Non-native Evergreen trees	March
Citrus	Don't prune except for hazards or health
Palm trees	June-flower stalks can be removed at this time too.
Conifers (pines, junipers, cypress)	During winter dormancy (January)
Spring-blooming shrubs	After bloom is finished
Summer-blooming shrubs	During winter dormancy

General Pruning Tips for Other Plants

Common name	Scientific name	Pruning Tips	Fertilizer
Agave	<i>Agave sp.</i>	Avoid all pruning. Pruning wounds often lead to pest infestations. Most Agave species will die after blooming. Do not “pineapple” prune.	Annually Late Spring or Summer
Aloe	<i>Aloe</i>	Pruning is not recommended. Dried flower stalks can be removed.	Annually, Spring
Ocotillo	<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>	Do not prune. Plant in an area that will accommodate mature size.	Annually Late Spring or Summer
Red or yellow yucca	<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	Do not prune. Dried flower stalks can be removed. Do not shear.	Annually Late Spring or Summer
Yucca Desert Spoon	<i>Yucca sp.</i> <i>Dasyilirion wheeleri</i>	No pruning needed. Dry, old leaves can be “peeled” on some species. Can remove old flower stalks after blooming. Do not “pineapple prune”. Do not shear.	Annually Late Spring or Summer
Fan Palms	<i>Brahea armata</i> <i>Chamaerops linearis</i>	Cut dry or dead fronds. Do not top. Do not cut green fronds. Only prune fronds horizontal to the ground and lower to not damage the terminal bud at the top of the crown.	Mid-spring and late summer
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia sp.</i>	Plant in an area that will accommodate mature size. If needed, make pruning cuts at the joints.	Annually Late Spring or Summer

More about Palms...



As new foliage is produced from the terminal bud at the top of the crown, the lower and older leaves (fronds) gradually turn brown and die. If left alone, these eventually fall off, some sooner than others. Pruning of palms can keep them looking tidy, but pruning too high up or too close on the trunk can cause damage, disease, water uptake problems, or trunk constriction.

Green leaves should not be removed. Do not prune up beyond the horizontal since this exposes tender tissues and may lead to disease, bud damage, splitting or constriction of the trunk (called "pencil pointing"). Palms that have been pruned too close often break in winds. Typically the leaf bases are allowed to stay until they are completely dry, thus easier to cut off. The old leaf bases on California and Mexican Fan palms or Mediterranean Fans can be cut off with a sharp linoleum knife. Shaving or skinning trunks is unnecessary and may cause wounds that allow entry of insects or disease.

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