

## Pruning Lilac Bushes

By Kelly Sharf, Hilltop Gardens

Pruning your Lilac Bushes properly will increase the beauty and fragrance of this early spring bloomer. A staple in most landscapes.

Pruning should be done right after the blooms have faded. Lilac, like many other spring flowering bushes set the next seasons flowers almost immediately after blooming. Late pruning may sacrifice flowers the next year.

Early pruning has the added benefit of giving new shoots more energy to develop.

Pruning no more than one third of the stems each year is recommended. A variety of different aged stems is preferred. Begin with all the dead and diseased stems. Then the pencil thin suckers and finally stems two inches or more in diameter.

A new Lilac Bush will not require pruning until they reach six to eight feet tall. It may take a couple of years for newer stems to produce blooms.

Regular pruning has a secondary benefit, with better air flow it will help prevent the chance of disease such as Powdery Mildew.

To further boost blooms, fertilize early in the spring. A well balanced fertilizer is best. Avoid a high nitrogen content as this may lead to insufficient blooming.

With diligent yearly pruning your eight foot Lilac will have flowers throughout and be the envy of the neighborhood.