

Cutting Back Plants for More Bloom and Height Control

With all of the rain we have been receiving through the spring and early summer, many plants have grown tall and now are too tall to actually fit into many flower bed plans.

Certain perennial plants can be cut back at different times in the season to keep them “shorter” and bushier. Later blooming plants cut back in “early” (before the 4th) July will shorten the plant making it bushier and cause it to bloom two to three weeks later than it normally blooms. This process can be used to “time” plant bloom, in order to fit into a party or garden tour schedule.

Plants that can be pruned for height: Mums, Asters, Monkshood, Hibiscus, Joe-pye Weed, Helen’s Flower (Helenium), Beebalm (Monarda), Tall Phlox (Phlox paniculata), Tall Sedums, Catmint (Nepeta hybrids), Turtlehead(chelone hybrids), Veronica hybrids, Yarrow, Russian sage, Artemisia, Balloon flower, Dragonhead, and Culver's root.

Some plants do not respond well to pruning. These are plants with one terminal flower spike or plants with leaves in a low rosette rather than a long stem.

Plants that should not be pruned include: Columbine, Astilbe, Delphinium, Daylily, Coral bell, Hosta, Iris, Foxglove and Dianthus.

Most perennials bloom for three to four weeks at their appointed time, in the season. Many do have the capability to bloom continuously for two to three months!!!

If you want more prolonged bloom on your perennial plants, consider deadheading, the plant is not producing seed which, in some plants signals the plant to flower again. Remember to feed this plant to give it an energy boost to produce this second floral display, with a “bloom booster fertilizer” with a higher middle number, which is phosphorus that promotes bloom.