

Grounds Tips for May

PRUNING THE MAY RULE:

Knowing what needs to be pruned and when is a question we are asked from gardeners all the time. It can be confusing and even scary when you think about it. You wonder am I pruning at the wrong time; am I going to keep my plant from blooming? There's a simple rule that we like to follow, and, while there are exceptions, this rule is applicable to most flowering shrubs. It's a simple way to remember what needs to be pruned and when. *It's the May rule. On any shrub that blooms before May, wait until after it blooms to prune it. If it blooms in May or later, prune in late winter or early spring.*



Shrubs that bloom early in the spring are blooming on old growth. Their flower buds were set last season. Shrubs that bloom later bloom on new wood, so it's okay to prune them early in the year.

Hydrangeas are a bit tricky. Some bloom on old wood and some bloom on new wood. So, it's important to know which type you have.

Mophead and Oakleaf hydrangeas bloom on old wood. Prune them after they bloom, if needed. Hydrangea paniculata (like Tardiva) and arborescens (like Annabelle's) bloom on new wood and would need to be pruned in late winter.

What to prune now - So, now is the time to prune azaleas, spirea, beautybush, forsythia, pieris, viburnum, rhododendron, quince, mountain laurel, kerria, Indian hawthorn, and all the other early spring bloomers that you haven't pruned yet.

WEED/PEST CONTROL – Some general information for you

Powdery Mildew:

Powdery mildew fungus is a common disease on many plants and produces a white powdery appearance on leaves and sometimes other green parts. It can be found on roses, dahlias, chrysanthemums, peas and squash. Some rose varieties are so susceptible that you would be better off removing the plant. On campus, we tend to 'tolerate' infestations but you could try the following method on your plants at home -



A homemade spray with baking soda may be used for control. To each gallon of water, add 2.5 teaspoons of light horticulture oil (or salad oil) and four teaspoons of baking soda. Use a fine spray on affected plants, but sparingly as some plants may show some sensitivity. More control methods are available in the UC Pest Note on Powdery Mildew.



Gophers:

Gophers are also called Pocket Gophers. They make their presence known with crescent shaped mounds of dirt in the garden. Snacking on plant and tree roots as they tunnel through the soil, they are active year round and can have up to three litters a year in well-watered areas. They also gnaw on irrigation lines and divert water into their tunnels, making it difficult to properly water plants. Adults live about

three years. Please submit a follow up for Crane Pest Control to address any gopher issues on campus.

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