

WINTERIZING PERENNIALS

Winterizing your perennials is a process that can extend from October into early spring, depending on the perennial. Leaves are a plant's life source and should not be pruned completely until after several hard frosts. This natural die-down allows the plant to store extra energy in its roots.

Here are some commonly grown perennials in St. Louis and their recommended winterization times:

AFTER KILLING FROST

(After a killing frost, prune these perennials to ground level.)

Anemone (*Anemone x*)
Bee Balm (*Monarda*)
Catmint (*Nepeta*)
Cranesbill (*Geranium*)
Daylily (*Hemerocallis*)
Garden Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)
Hosta (*Hosta*)
Iris (*Iris sibirica*)
Peony (*Paeonia*)
Sedum (*Sedum*)
Threadleaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata*)

To Basal Foliage

(These perennials should be cut to basal foliage after killing frost or in spring if you're leaving the seed heads for winter interest. Basal foliage refers to the new leaves that emerge at the plant's base.)

Bellflower (*Campanula*)
Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*)
Coneflower (*Echinacea*)
Penstemon (*Penstemon digitalis*)
Shasta Daisy (*Leucanthemum x superbum*)
Yarrow (*Achillea*)

PRUNE IN SPRING

Evergreen or woody perennials should be pruned in spring. Other perennials benefit from leaving their foliage intact over winter, as it protects the plant's crown.

Benefit from Winter Protection

(Prune these perennials to the ground just before new foliage emerges in spring.)

Aster (*Symphyotrichum*)
Astilbe (*Astilbe*)
Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
False Indigo (*Baptisia*)
Mum (*Chrysanthemum*)

Evergreen Foliage

(Remove dead foliage and spent flower stems. Tidy up remaining foliage. Defer any hard pruning until new growth emerges in spring.)

Cheddar Pinks (*Dianthus gratianopolitanus*)
Coral Bells (*Heuchera*)
Creeping Phlox (*Phlox subulata*)

Woody Foliage

(Give these perennials only a light pruning in fall, if necessary. In spring, prune up to 1/3 of the plant to control size or shape.)

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)

pruning

Exceptions

Bearded Iris (*Iris germanica*) - Always prune Bearded Iris in the fall. Although the leaves will still be green, they are prone to harboring Iris Borer larvae.

Hardy Hibiscus (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) - Always cut down in spring just after new growth appears. Hardy hibiscus have hollow stems in which moisture can collect, potentially causing the plant to rot.

Ornamental Grasses (various species) - Ornamental grasses provide winter interest to gardens. If you choose to cut them back in fall, wait until they're completely dead. Otherwise, prune in late winter or early spring before new growth emerges. (See our Pruning Guide for Ornamental Grasses for more information)

Roses (*Rosa* spp.) - Prune back by 1/3 in the fall only if shaping is necessary. For more extensive pruning, wait until early spring, just before or as new growth emerges.