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We were awarded "Best Of Houzz" 2015 for Customer Satisfaction by Houzz, the leading platform for home remodeling and design. Our 8 year old landscape design firm was chosen by the more than 25 million monthly unique users that comprise the Houzz community from among more than 500,000 active home building, remodeling and design industry professionals.

We want to thank all of our wonderful clients who have given us the privilege of working on their property.

Jay Petrow



Jay's creative vision, coupled with his horticultural knowledge, produces extraordinary landscapes for his clients.

To reach Jay with your landscaping questions, please call 203-803-0533 or [email](#)



The Garden in March

Greetings!

With the snow on the ground finally almost gone, now is the time to start doing early spring pruning. Here's a primer on pruning if you want to get outside and help your trees and shrubs stay healthy and looking good.

Read on to also learn about when to prune hydrangeas so you don't cut off this year's flowers ...

The Most Common Pruning Mistakes

Typically we will do winter pruning of broken branches and thinning out and shaping woody shrubs sometime in March or early April. Pruning at this time of year keeps the plant structure looking good, allows for better air circulation inside the plant, and helps prevent disease and insect damage from occurring due to damaged branches. With all the snow this winter many plants have had a difficult time and may even need more extensive, restorative pruning. It's very important to the long term health of your plants that a regular pruning schedule be maintained.

It's also helpful to know the specific characteristics of each plant's growth habit in order to prune it correctly. I can't go into all the variations in pruning execution here but there are many good books on how to prune. The one I reference most is [American Horticultural Society Pruning & Training](#), a book written by Christopher Brickell. Cornell University's online guide, [Pruning: An Illustrated Guide to Pruning Ornamental Trees and Shrubs](#) is also a great reference that can be downloaded for free.

I came across a wonderful article posted on the [Fine Gardening](#) website that describes some very common and unsightly pruning mistakes which are pictured below. One important aspect of pruning is to not make the plant worse off in the end. This article describes some common pruning mistakes and the proper way to avoid them.



Topping a tree (above) is not the way to reduce it's height. Strategic reduction of the taller branches will produce a better form when you are finished

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Shaping any tree like a ball, or, in this weeping cherry's case, like one of the Beatles, is not the natural look you want in your yard.

Why Don't I Have Any Flowers On My Hydrangeas?



The lacecap hydrangea is a macrophylla variety that blooms on old wood and cannot be pruned in the spring without damaging this year's buds.

Hydrangeas present a lot of confusion for gardeners when it comes to pruning. That's because there's no single method that's right for all hydrangeas and if you prune incorrectly you end up with no flowers that season.

In an article in [Better Homes & Gardens](#), when asked why a hydrangea isn't blooming, Vincent Simeone, a horticulturalist, lecturer, and garden writer, is likely to ask about hydrangea pruning practices. "Improper pruning causes a lot of blooming problems," says Simeone. That's because many gardeners don't understand that not all hydrangeas bloom the same way: some bloom on new wood, and some bloom on the previous year's wood. When pruning occurs at the wrong time, it can eliminate the upcoming bloom.



Paniculata varieties of hydrangea, like this white flowering PeeGee Tree, can be pruned this year because it blooms on new wood

Pee Gee hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata*, which includes varieties such as 'Limelight') as well as smooth hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*, best known for the variety 'Annabelle') bloom on new wood. Timing for the pruning of these types of hydrangea is not as critical, says Simeone. "You can prune in winter or early spring and they will grow and flower in the same season," he says.

Big leaf, or mophead, hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) and oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) both bloom on the previous season's growth. "If you prune these at the wrong time of the year, they either won't flower or will flower sporadically," says Simeone. These should be pruned soon after flowering in summer, and never too severely -- less than one-third of the plant at any one time, Simeone says. Deep freezes, like we have had the last couple of winters, can also damage last year's flower buds and considerably reduce this year's flowers.

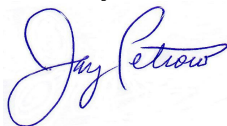
Some newer varieties of big leaf hydrangea, including the popular 'Endless Summer', have been bred to bloom on new wood as well as old wood. This makes them better for cold climates because even if the old stems suffer cold damage, new growth will still bloom. It also provides more flexibility in pruning. "You can prune it at any time of the year and it should still bloom," says Simeone. Even so, pruning right after bloom will maximize flowering.



Endless Summer has become a very popular hydrangea because it blooms on old and new wood and can be pruned almost anytime

It's always good to go slow when pruning yourself. It's much harder to put branches back on than take a few more off later. If you have any questions, give me a call.

Sincerely,



PetrowGardens Landscape Design
203 803-0533

[Email Jay](#)

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PetrowGardens Landscape Design creates unique landscape solutions by integrating classic design principles of repetition of shapes, harmonization of colors, and use of contrasting textures and forms with artistic expression. The resulting gardens promise to be inviting to explore and stimulating to your senses. Native and non-native plants that provide seasonal interest for both you and the wildlife in our region are used in our designs.

