

May 2020

# REPTON GREEN FINGERS

Editor Pauline Little

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Link to video: <https://youtu.be/qwC2culKv9k>

## SPRING PRUNING - WHAT TO DO PRUNE NOW

### BIG THANK YOU

First of all a big thank you to all the folk who came to support our plant stall last weekend. It was lovely to speak to so many people and to hear about your gardening adventures. Do post about what you are doing, we are all so interested. Also let me know what you want to see in the newsletters and videos.

### EARLY FLOWERING SHRUBS



I often see what I call car park pruning where shrubs are given a haircut often at an unsuitable time of year. The result is an amorphous blob that doesn't flower well and looks like er..... an amorphous blob. So how should you prune early flowering shrubs? As soon as it has finished flowering go armed with some loppers, a pruning saw and some strong secateurs, you are aiming to cut out about one third of the oldest growth, so look at the bottom of the shrub, the bit that is really awkward to get at and decide how many stems you need to remove and get cutting as close to the ground as possible.

You want to create a plant that looks the right shape so you may need to shorten some of the long stems that are left, to stop branches from flopping over.

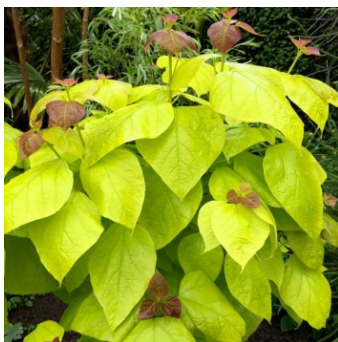
The reason for going to all this effort is that the best flowers will come on one and two year old stems produced this summer, but the three year old stems will not flower well at all. If you do it well this year it will be much easier next year. Okay, I get it. You've let the plant become an overgrown mess that is threatening to take over the garden bed. Thoughts of subtle pruning needs to be thrown out the window. If your plant is in this state, just crop the whole shrub to about 4 or 5 inches off the ground. After such an attack the shrub will appreciate a feed and a mulch if you anything to spare. You can do this renewal pruning on many shrubs such as forsythia, ribes and weigelia.



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## LATE SUMMER INTEREST SHRUBS

Some plants flower on this years wood or have foliage or winter stems as their main attraction; these shrubs need plenty of fresh young growth and should be pruned in Spring, it is getting a bit late now but you can still get away with pruning willow, eucalyptus and catalpa for foliage, they are all strong growers and will recover easily. We try to prune our buddleias in late February or March but if you have a huge bush that you want to tame just cut it all down to where you can see buds growing, they are very strong growers and still have time to recover and flower on the new wood produced this summer



## EASY PRUNING OF MEDITERRANEAN PLANTS

Most Mediterranean plants become a sprawling mess if they are not pruned regularly, so be brave and cut back as hard as you dare. I hesitate to advise to cut into old wood with no shoots but many plants such as lavender will shoot if the plant is not too old, if in doubt then prune leaving one or two leaves on each stem. The reality is that many of these plants are not long lived and most are easy to grow from cuttings and are not too expensive. If you have an old neglected lavender bush (more than five years old) that is half dead at the bottom and doesn't have that lovely bossomy look, think how long you have enjoyed it for and buy another or try to take a cutting.

Jobs to do in May in the garden

If you want to keep a plant give some away