

The Bougainvillea shrub is a versatile, evergreen desert woody vine that flowers throughout the year in shades of magenta or light pink. This resilient, drought tolerant plant grows into a variety of shapes, including climbing vines and bushes. With proper pruning and care, Bougainvillea can brighten up many space and landscapes.



## Fall Pruning

During the fall months, it's a good idea to perform light, balanced pruning to keep the plant within its growth space and off of walkways. Try to avoid major pruning before winter so that you do not expose sensitive parts of the plant to freezing temperatures.

In order to prepare your Bougainvillea for the winter months, cease watering around Thanksgiving. You can start watering again around mid-February when daytime temperatures increase into the 80's.

## Protecting Your Plants From Winter Frost

In the colder months, do not prune your Bougainvillea! If your plant suffers frost damage, wait to prune until the threat of frost has passed. This is usually by March. It may seem counterproductive, but the frost-damaged portions of the plant actually act as insulation for the rest of the plant. Pruning that damages risks your plant incurring more.

## Once Spring Arrives, It's Time to Prune

So frost is gone and you're ready to prune your Bougainvillea to ready it for the upcoming growing season. You have two options. Like in the fall, you can perform light pruning to trim just the extremities. Or, if there is major damage, you can cut the plant down almost to its base. This helps to stimulate entirely new growth. Just be sure to wear protective clothing, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and gloves, as Bougainvilleas have lots of thorns.

Once you notice daytime temperatures are consistently in the 80's, start regular watering again.

## Tips for Planting New Bougainvillea

There are a few factors to keep in mind when planting a new Bougainvillea in your yard. These plants can grow in a variety of spaces, but the fine root system requires soil that can drain effectively to mitigate root rot. These plants thrive best in direct sunlight for at least 5 hours each day. And consider the frequency of blooming, which is followed with bloom drop. Bougainvillea make great natural hedges along walkways, but it's not the best idea to plant them near your pool.

With care and proper maintenance, your Bougainvillea plants will thrive and light up the landscape with their colorful blossoms.

