

## LILACS

Lilacs require minimal care. They seldom need water unless there is drought. Weeds at the base need to be pulled out by hand. Do not cultivate around the base of the plant as this may damage roots and suckers. Mulch conserves moisture and reduces weeds.

Dead flowers need to be removed after they wither to maintain vigor and assure next year's blooms. Allow the plant to develop several branches from the base, which allows removal of stems that have grown too tall, become diseased or infested, but still have flowering wood. Pruning is unnecessary the first 3 or 4 years. Limit pruning to removal of weak wood from the center of the bush. This prevents a thicket from developing. Spring flowering shrubs should be pruned shortly after flowering.

Lilac rejuvenation can be done to overgrown and poor flowering lilacs. A gradual cut back over 2 or 3 years is recommended. The first year, remove 1/3 of the old growth branches near ground level. The second year, use thinning techniques to back new growth. The third year, remove remaining old growth stems. By the end of the third year you should have a rejuvenated shrub.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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