

ASK THE LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Welcome

To my Weekly Series

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest. Email or mail your questions to:

info@sprigsandtwigs.net or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 0633



Question this Week:

Hi Linda,

I have these beautiful flowering plants that are now at least 12 feet tall. I'm not sure what they are since they were here when we bought the house. I love the flowers but they need help. They are too overgrown. Can I cut them back now? They flowered in June. Many thanks ...Gladys



Linda's Answer:

Hi Gladys,

I visited your property today. It's beautiful! Your shrub is a Fuzzy Deutzia (*Deutzia scabra*). It's a beautiful old shrub that cannot be found in nurseries anymore. You are very lucky. As far as pruning, this is the time to prune it. It bloomed in June and it's best to prune after it flowers. July would be the best time to do this but I think you will be ok to do it now. Regular pruning will not be enough for this shrub, it's too overgrown.

Rejuvenation pruning is in order. Take a chain saw and cut back each stem to about 2'tall. This process of cutting the upper stems will stimulate new shoots to grow from the base of the shrub which will eventually be the new stems for a new shrub. Water it about once a week until the end of August...let the hose run for about 1/2hr at a fast trickle to soak the soil. Fertilize it with Flowertone, just once around the base of the plant.

If you want to do this at a slower pace, just cut back 1/3 of the plant to 2' tall. Cut the oldest (biggest), woodiest stems first. Next July remove another 1/3 of the shrub and then the following July cut back the remaining 1/3. After each cutting, water and fertilize as mentioned above. After 3 years, you should have a nice-sized shrub at about half the size it is now.

If it was my shrub, I would do it all at once. Deutzias are tough fast growing shrubs. You will be amazed how fast it will re-sprout.

Good Luck.