



Landscape Design

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Grab the Trimmers!

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I'm often asked, "When should I trim my grasses and perennials?" Wonder no more: the time is now. Ornamental grasses and perennials are very easy maintenance plants, providing a LOT of garden pizzazz for very little work. To keep them looking their best, focus your energy on them in winter, right after the danger of frost is over and before the new shoots appear.

Grab the hedge trimmers and a ball of twine or bungee cord and tackle the ornamental grasses first. Gather and bundle the grass at its base with the twine or cord and then use the trimmers to give the clump a buzz cut, within 1" of the ground. Electric hedge trimmers work great for this, and the twine/cord keeps the grass together for easy clean up.

For your perennials, you want to trim them about 2/3 of the way back. Don't take them all the way to the ground like the grasses. I've used the hedge trimmers on perennials as well, with good results. It's not the more "natural" look that hand pruning gives you, but it is a time saver. When the plant starts growing back, you soon can't tell that it was "hedged" rather than clipped.

As a bonus, if the grass or perennial clump is getting too large, you can split it and create additional plants for your garden – or gifts for your friends.

Now is also the time to trim back your roses. I've seen stories about trimming roses with hedge trimmers, but I haven't tried it yet. If you have, please let me know what you thought! As with all of your winter pruning, it's best to wait until after the last frost (as best as anyone can guess). Then sit back and get ready for the Spring garden burst!