**Why Hard Prune in Spring?**

Many popular flowering landscape shrubs and small flowering trees are valued for their vibrant blooms throughout Southwest Florida. Commonly found in our landscapes are Hibiscus, Jatropha, Bougainvillea, Plumbago, Thryallis, and Ixora. These plants thrive in our warm, humid climate but require proper plant management, including pruning, to maintain their health and beauty.

**Effects of Fall and Winter on Flowering Shrubs**

During fall and winter, temperatures in the 30s and 40s cause leaf yellowing and drop in Hibiscus, Jatropha, and some Ixora varieties. This is a common occurrence in Southwest Florida, leaving plants bare until nighttime temperatures consistently reach the 60s, typically in late spring.

**Benefits of Spring Pruning**

A reduction pruning of one-third of stem length in late spring promotes fresh growth and fuller plants with new leaves and branching.

Additional benefits include:

* Improved Health: Pruning removes stems, leaves, and buds previously damaged by insects, such as pink hibiscus mealybugs and chili thrips.
* Enhanced Flowering: Since most flowering shrubs bloom from terminal buds, deep pruning encourages more prolific blooming.
* Increased Stability: A more compact plant structure helps shrubs like Hibiscus, Bougainvillea, and Jatropha withstand strong summer storms.

With proper pruning at the right time of year, flowering shrubs and small trees enhance landscapes with long-lasting beauty. Greenscapes provides professional landscape management to maximize the health and aesthetic appeal of your plants

**Recommended Pruning Practices**

Horticultural professionals recommend deep, staggered cuts a few times per growing season rather than frequent shearing. In late spring, a reduction pruning of one-third of stem length encourages:

* Fuller Growth: Plants develop new branches and leaves, improving overall structure.
* Healthier Blooms: Removing insect-damaged foliage allows the plant to direct energy toward flowering.
* Stronger Roots: Maintaining a proper root-to-shoot ratio helps plants withstand environmental stress.

**Conclusion**

Proper pruning is essential for maintaining the health and longevity of ornamental shrubs in Southwest Florida. Greenscapes is committed to educating clients on best horticultural practices, ensuring that landscapes thrive while promoting environmental stewardship.