



# Wisteria

Pruning Wisteria is essential to ensure a good display of flowers, as well as to keep this vigorous climber under control, and out of your gutters and roof tiles.

All you need is a clean sharp pair of secateurs and a ladder ... plus a helper holding the bottom of the ladder firm, if necessary.

Wisteria needs to be pruned twice a year – once in summer (July-August) and again in winter (January-February).

## Summer Pruning

The summer prune is essentially a 'tidy up', getting rid of the bulk of the long whippy growth, allowing light and air to circulate round the main framework of the plant. However, enough green growth needs to be left to allow the plant to continue to photosynthesise and therefore absorb the light required to grow and develop. The trick is not to be daunted by the tangle of green growth you have to wade through to find the main framework! Once you start, you'll find it gets easier and easier, as the structure is revealed and you're able to see what you're doing more clearly.

- Follow each whippy green strand back to where it leaves the main framework of the Wisteria
- From that point, count along the stem for approximately 5 or 6 leaf joints
- Just after that 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> joint, make a clean cut through the stem, ideally at a slight angle

To see a video of this procedure, produced by the RHS, go to:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/videos/advice/pruning-wisteria-summer>

## Winter Pruning

In many ways this is easier, as you won't have as much tangled growth to fight your way through. Follow exactly the same procedure as above, but on each of the stems that you previously cut back to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> leaf joint in the summer, you now take back even further to the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> joint, leaving a 'spur' from which the plant will send out flowers in the early spring.

**Top tip:** Wisteria are hungry plants, so mulch with well-rotted horse manure spring and autumn. This will slowly release nutrients into the soil and help ensure you have a fabulous flower display.