

Time to Prune Wisteria

The most common question asked about wisteria is, “Why doesn’t my wisteria bloom?” Vines generally begin to bloom upon maturity at 8 - 10 years. However, there is a way to coax blossoms from reluctant vines for quicker blooming. The secret is proper pruning.

Timing

The best time to prune is in mid-to-late winter, any time from late January through mid - February. This timing will determine whether your pruning is successful. It’s quite possible you will also need to prune a second time in late July. By this time your wisteria is probably taking over your house, garden, arbor, patio, etc.

Technique

How you prune is just as important as when. See that forest of scraggly shoots sprouting upward from the thicker main canes? Use a sharp pruning shear or loppers, and cut off shoots to no more than 4 or 5 buds. Make your cut about 1/4 inch above the topmost bud. This temporarily stops the runners from growing, and instead forms clusters of blooming spurs.

So what happens if you prune your wisteria this winter and this spring it still doesn’t bloom? It could be that it gets too much shade, or that it gets too much fertilizer. Or it could be that it gets a kick out of tormenting you!