

## Dear Monarch,

The landscapers hacked my plants down to bare sticks! It looks terrible! It was a big, beautiful plant and now I think it should be replaced.

## REJUVENATION PRUNING

Dear Concerned Homeowner,

Hard pruning is tough love. Never fear! This is an intentional, necessary part of seasonal maintenance.

You may not know but . . .

- Many plants in the landscape respond well to "hard pruning", also called **rejuvenation pruning** (cutting plants to the ground) or renewal pruning (gradually cutting back woody plants).
- Many species need annual or bi-annual shearing to rest through the cold and come back **fresh for spring** with improved **flower production**.
- Neglecting this pruning will lead to an unsightly build-up of dead material, distort the intended growth habit of the plant, and ultimately require more labor down the line to correct or replace.
- Eliminating thatch discourages unwelcome pests and increased air flow prevents disease.
- While shocking at first glance, this pruning reinforces the sense of **seasonality** and **naturalization** that has come into favor in contemporary landscape design. Watching new growth emerge is also a great lesson in patience and life cycles for our young landscape enthusiasts.
- Common plants that benefit from hard pruning
  - Salvias (sages, such as Mexican bush sage)
  - Pennisetum (and other ornamental grasses)
  - Bougainvillea
  - Roses
  - Dietes (fortnight lily): often every other year
  - Guara ('Whirling Butterflies' is a popular choice)
  - Some California natives, such as Romneya (Matilija poppy)



### MONARCH FUN FACT

Trying this at home? Never attempt hard pruning on a **single-stemmed** shrub - it may not recover. Ask a pro if you're unsure!