



Topic: Ixora Pruning

Question: I have a question regarding pruning ixora shrubs and hope you will answer it for me. I have several ixora shrubs that survived last winter's cold weather and I want to keep them healthy. When pruning the dead flowers off, should I make a cut immediately after the dead flowers or would it be best to go down a few sets of leaves? Also, I was told that they do not like to be pruned very often. I am only cutting off the dead flowers until late the following spring, and then I do a major 1/3 cut back as we go north for 6 months.

- Marlene, Fort Myers

Answer: Ixora are small and large leafed. Large leaf Ixora are generally ever-blooming plants and will do so if the weather is sufficiently warm, especially if left unpruned. Since your plant is currently in bloom, it can be assumed that it is one of the large leaf cultivars. If grown as a shrub, the plant generally needs no more pruning than once or twice a year. Not pruning it for several years is another alternative as it will still continue to bloom. Removing spent blooms is not necessary since they are usually not noticeably messy or unattractive. Pruning this and other tropical floriferous plants is best done in late February or early March. A severe cut back, as you've indicated, will probably mean no new flowers until June. However, as you will not be around, this is of little visual consequence. Cutting it back by 1/3 every year should not cause it permanent damage. More severe and frequent prunings, especially of an older Ixora, can weaken and shorten the plant's life. That is because excessive removal of the green leaves means the removal of the food producing organs. Food is produced by sunlight, leaves and photosynthesis; not fertilizers.

Useful Links

[Lee County Fertilizer Ordinance](#)

[Stephen's Webpage](#)

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by sending an email to brownsh@leegov.com.