

A **lilac** that doesn't bloom -- there could be several reasons.

If they have lots of nitrogen, e.g., from lawn fertilizer, they'll make leaves not flowers. To fertilize lilacs, use a formula that is high in the middle number -- phosphorus. (Folk tips: Some people scatter a little hardwood ash around, which also helps reduce soil acidity. Other people dig banana peels in, or scatter epsom salts around the drip line, which add potassium and magnesium respectively.)

Lilacs flower on "old wood" -- what they grew the previous summer -- so if you prune, do it right after flowering, *before* they've created the buds for next spring's bloom.

They need full sun (min. 6h) and good drainage. If your lilac doesn't have those, consider transplanting it to a better location. (It may take a couple of years after transplant to settle in and bloom again.)

An old lilac may stop blooming -- a "rejuvenation" pruning might help. A young lilac may not bloom for a few years: you have to wait it out.

A dry hot summer (e.g. 2016) prevents flower buds from developing; a warm winter also inhibits bud development; and as with soft-fruit trees like cherry, a late freeze will kill that year's blossoms.

(Prepared by Kate Hamilton, June 2017)