

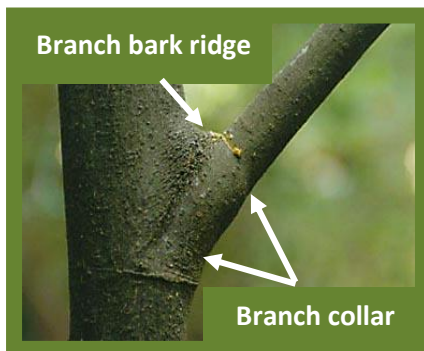
PRUNING YOUNG TREES

Why we prune trees

Properly pruned trees are not only more aesthetically pleasing, but stronger. Pruning young trees can significantly reduce the likelihood of limb or structural trunk failure as the tree matures. This means a longer life span for the tree and a better return on your investment. Before you prune, always have an objective in mind. Consider the following reason to prune your tree:

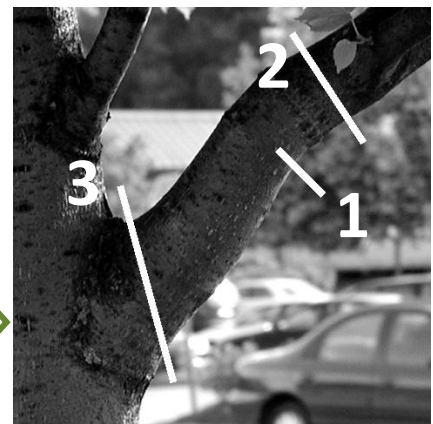
- **Safety:** Remove branches that could fall and cause injury or interfere with utility lines, roads.
- **Health:** Remove disease or insect infected wood, improve structure, reduce likelihood of damage during storms.
- **Fruit Production:** Increase light and air circulation.
- **Appearance:** Control plant size and form, enhance views.

Where to make the cut?



Pruning cuts should be made outside the branch collar. The branch collar is made up of trunk tissue and, if left intact, will seal off the pruning wound. The cut should start at the branch bark ridge. These photos illustrate where to make a proper cut.

For large branches, make a three part cut to prevent bark ripping. This photo illustrates the three cut pruning method for branches larger than 1 inch in diameter. The first partial cut is made from below to prevent the bark from tearing. The branch is removed with the second cut. The third cut removes the stub cleanly and without damaging the branch collar or any bark on the trunk.



When to Prune?

The ideal time to prune trees is during the winter months when trees are dormant. **Avoid pruning just after leaf emergence and just before leaf fall.** Although branches that are dead, diseased or damaged can be removed anytime. To reduce the stress on newly planted trees, pruning should not begin until 3 years after planting. Spring flowering trees and shrubs, like lilac, redbud and dogwood, should be pruned immediately after flowering to preserve this year's flower crop.

Keep Your Feet on the Ground...Hire an Arborist

An arborist is a specialist in the care of individual trees. Arborists are knowledgeable about the needs of trees and are trained and equipped to provide proper care. Pruning or removing trees, especially large trees, can be dangerous work - only those trained and equipped to work safely in trees should do tree work. If you can't prune it from the ground, hire an arborist. The International Society of Arboriculture offers arborist certification.

To find a certified arborist near you visit: www.isa-arbor.com/findArborist/findarborist.aspx

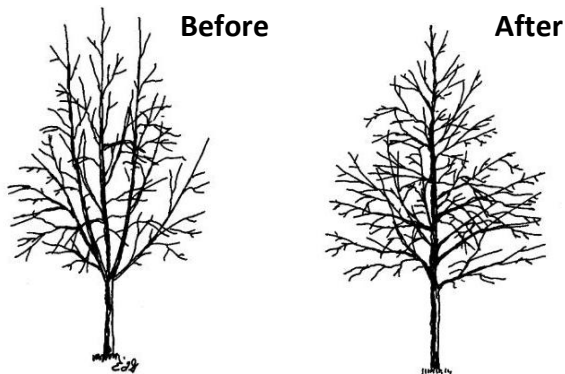
Steps to Tree Pruning

Whether you are pruning to establish good form and branch structure on a young tree or pruning to maintain a healthy mature tree, pruning is a multi-year endeavor. Here are some steps to guide you as your tree grows:

- ✓ Remove broken, diseased, dying and dead branches any time of year, at any stage of the tree's life.

Beginning three years after planting.....

- ✓ Select a central leader (single trunk) and remove or shorten co-dominant leaders or competing leaders.
- ✓ Promote strong branch unions with the main stem structure. Look for "U" shaped unions and the branch bark ridge. Remove or reduce branches with weak or a "V" shaped union.



As the tree grows ...

- ✓ Thin the crown. Remove rubbing branches and continue to promote one central leader. Reduce or remove competing leaders.
- ✓ Raise crown to provide clearance for sidewalks, vehicles and buildings. Check local ordinances for minimum branch height mandates (e.g. 8' over sidewalks).
- ✓ Reduce the height and spread of the crown as necessary. Always bring the branch back to a lateral branch at least 1/3 the size of the stem removed.

Helpful Tips

- Understand the trees growth form before you make a cut.
- No more than 25% of the living crown should be removed in one year. Large defective limbs or exceptionally vigorous trees may warrant more aggressive pruning.
- Roughly 1/2 of the foliage should be on branches originating from the lower 2/3 of the main stem. This rule can be useful in guiding your selection of permanent branches.

Choose Bypass Pruners over Anvil Pruners

Bypass pruners have a blade that sweep by the lower jaw. Anvil pruners have a blade that closes against an anvil on the lower jaw. Bypass pruners make a cleaner cut, and reduce the risk of damage to the tree and should be the tool of choice.



Don't Apply Pruning Paint or Wound Dressing:

The use of pruning paint, historically thought to protect the tree after the cut, is not recommended today. Proper pruning is the best strategy to help a tree seal the wound properly.

References

Photos and illustrations by Edward F. Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS, University of Florida. USDA Forest Service, NE Area State & Private Forestry. *Tree Owner's Manual For Northeastern & Midwestern United States*. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in partnership with the University of Vermont Extension. Factsheets paid for by a grant from the USDA NIFA Forestry Program as part of the University of Connecticut's FREMO initiative.