

BEST PRACTICES



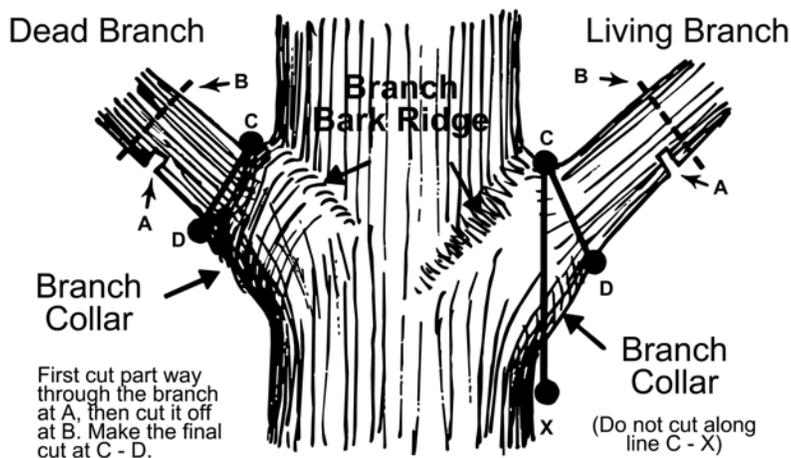
Tree Pruning Simplified

Determine why the tree should be pruned:

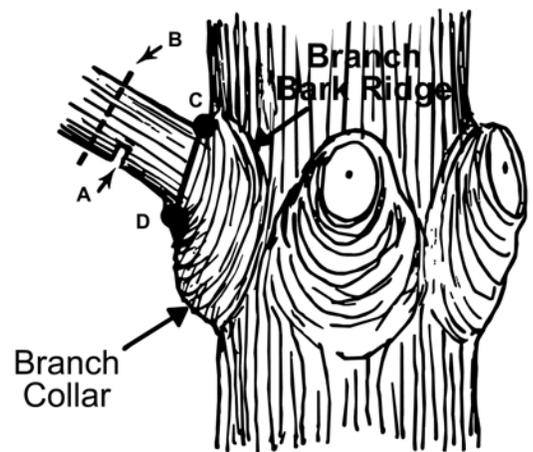
- Newly planted trees need very little if any pruning other than the removal of dead, broken or diseased branches.
- Prune established young trees (in the ground 2 – 3 years) to establish the leader and branching habit to ensure good structural strength and low maintenance as the tree matures.

Maintenance pruning of mature trees may be done to direct growth, to remove or repair hazardous branches, and/or to improve the health, balance and aesthetics of the tree.

Proper Pruning Principles



Hardwoods



Conifers



NEVER NEVER TOP A TREE!

- Topping opens the interior of the tree to disease, pests and rot.

- Topping does NOT keep a tree small—trees typically grow even longer sprouts to make up for the lost foliage.
- Topping is expensive.
- Topping creates hazards in trees that didn't exist prior to topping.
- IT'S UGLY!!

Pruning tips

- Make all cuts just outside the branch collar. **DO NOT** leave stubs.
- **DO NOT** make flush cuts or shallow “scoop cuts”; neither of these allow the tree to make use of its own healing mechanism, but rather remove it altogether, leaving the tree wide-open to disease, pests and rot.
- Select branches for removal using the following priorities:
 1. Dead, diseased, or damaged branches, including stubs from previous pruning jobs.
 2. Competing leaders (co-dominant stems); select the straightest, most desirable leader and remove or sublimate the rest.
 3. Rootstock suckers or watersprouts.
 4. Trim or remove branches for clearance: signs, pedestrian, vehicular.
 5. Remove branches that are badly placed, poorly attached, or have narrow V-shaped branch angles.
 6. Lightly shape the tree for balance or desired form
- Pruning is generally best done when trees are dormant, from late fall until early spring. As with all things tree, however, there are exceptions!
- Most pruning cuts should be thinning cuts; that is, twigs should be cut back to the originating branch. Heading cuts may be made on small branches, just above a bud.
- Never remove more than one-third of the crown mass, preferably much less.
- The best branching angle is approximately 35° (“ten o'clock” or “two o'clock”); narrower angles are weak and prone to breakage.
- **It's NOT NECESSARY** to paint tree wounds, in fact, it may be harmful because the paint holds moisture in the wound which encourages disease and pests, and doesn't allow the tree's own healing process to work.
- Structural pruning: select the main leader and primary scaffold branches when the tree is young.
- Clean pruning tools between each cut and between trees with bleach or rubbing alcohol when pruning diseased trees to help prevent spread of disease.

Source: Department of Natural Resources