

Intro to Pruning Trees

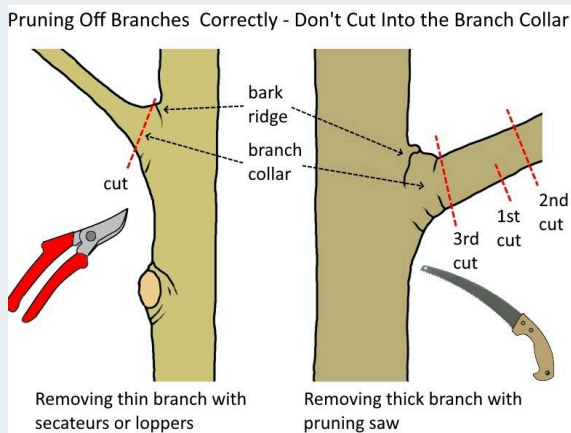
A tree may need pruning for a variety of reasons such as: removal of diseased or storm-damaged branches, thinning the crown to permit new growth and better air circulation, reducing the height of a tree, removing obstructing branches, to shape a tree for design purposes.

Once the decision has been made to prune, your next decision is whether you want to tackle the job yourself. In the case of a large trees where use of ladder or cherry picker is needed we recommend you hire a professional. The following instructions are meant for smaller trees.

How to Prune

Branches and stems are separated by a lip of tissue called a collar which grows out from the stem at the base of the branch. All pruning cuts should be made on the branch side of this collar. This protects the stem and the other branches that might be growing from it, and allows the tree to heal more effectively after pruning.

To prevent tearing of the bark and stem wood, particularly in the case of larger branches, use the following procedure:



Thinner branches can be pruned with shears or loppers. Depending on the size of your shears depends on how thick of a branch you can cut. Make a single cut just on the branch side of the collar

Pruning Tools

Buy the best tool you can afford and keep it in good condition. Make sure you know how to use the tool by following the manufactures instructions that come with it, and never use a tool if you are unsure or uncomfortable with operating it.

After each tree you prune, remember to disinfect your pruning tools in a 9:1 water and bleach solution followed by cleaning with soapy water and then drying. Tree diseases are easily spread by infected tools.

When to Prune

The dormant season, late fall or winter, is the best time to prune although dead branches can and should be removed at any time. Pruning during the dormant period minimizes sap loss and subsequent stress to the tree. It also minimizes the risk of disease or insect infestation as diseases and insects are likely to be in dormancy at the same time as the tree. Finally, in the case of deciduous trees, pruning when the leaves are off will give you a better idea of how your pruning will affect the shape of the tree.

How Much to Prune

It is best to prune as little as possible. Pruning stresses a tree & can increase the risk of disease & insects. You should never prune more than 25% of the crown and ensure that living branches compose at least 2/3 of the height of the tree. Over pruning can fatally damage your tree.

1st Cut Make a small wedge shaped cut on the underside of the branch. This will break the bark and prevent a tear from running along the bark and stem tissue.

2nd Cut 2-3" up from the first cut, starting at the top of the branch, cut all the way through the branch leaving a stub end.

3rd Cut parallel to and just on the branch side of the collar to reduce the length of the stub as much as possible