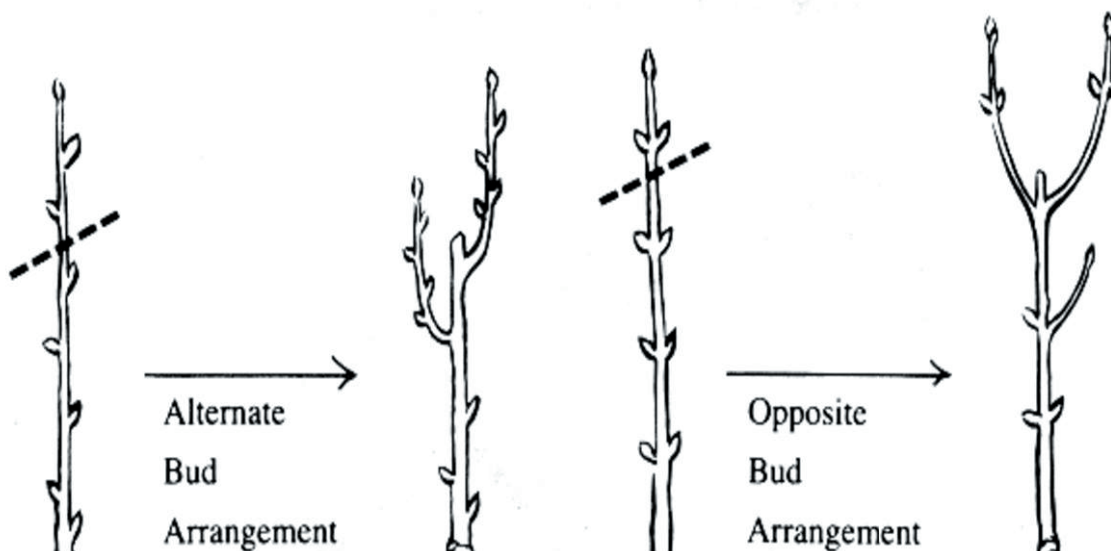


Spring Pruning

General Response to Pruning

- 1) Pruning is an invigorating process that reduces the size of the above-ground portion of the plant in relation to the root system. As a result, the undisturbed root system services a smaller number of branches, leaves and buds. The relative uptake of water and nutrients by the remaining top-growth increases and a flush of new growth occurs.
- 2) Generally, the more severe the pruning, the greater the resulting growth. In essence, the plant is re-growing in an attempt to restore balance between the top portion and the root system.
- 3) Most arborists agree that a 1/3rd rule should be followed when pruning or trimming plants. This is where no more than 1/3rd of a plant's living growth should be removed at one time. Removing too much living growth can 'starve' plants to death because too much of a plant's food making ability is being removed. There is no limit to the amount of dead or diseased wood you can remove - they do not benefit the plant.
- 4) One should employ angled cuts (usually at 45 degrees) when possible. Flat cuts on top of larger branches can cradle water whereas angled cuts will allow water to slide right off.
- 5) Pruning will generally stimulate the growth of lateral buds just below the pruning cut – anywhere between 1-8 inches depending on the variety.



Pruning Timing and Tips

Late Winter & Early Spring

The late dormant season is best for most pruning. Pruning during this time is beneficial because it invigorates trees and shrubs by leaving the plants with extra energy reserves that will support new growth on the remaining branches. Pruning in winter also reduces the length of time wounds are open. As new growth begins the wounds are sealed to prevent disease. Lastly, without leaves in the way you can see the branching and it gets you out of the house!

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Barberry</i> | <i>Cotoneaster</i> | <i>Clethra</i> | <i>Juniper</i> | <i>Linden</i> |
| <i>Sumac</i> | <i>Euonymus</i> | <i>Rose of Sharon</i> | <i>Spruce</i> | <i>Oak</i> |
| <i>Alpine currant</i> | <i>Burning Bush</i> | <i>Honeylocust</i> | <i>Arborvitae</i> | <i>Pine</i> |
| <i>Honeysuckle</i> | <i>Ninebark</i> | <i>Spirea</i> | <i>Holly</i> | <i>Crabapple</i> |
| <i>Sandcherry</i> | <i>Smokebush</i> | <i>Potentilla</i> | <i>Yew</i> | <i>Privet</i> |
| <i>Dogwood</i> | <i>Butterfly Bush</i> | <i>Privet</i> | <i>Boxwood</i> | <i>Elderberry</i> |

Late Spring/Early Summer

These plants produce flowers on growth from the previous year. The best time to prune them is late spring - immediately after they finish blooming. If you prune them later in the growing season or during winter, you risk removing buds and decreasing the amount of spring blooms.

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Azalea</i> | <i>Viburnum</i> | <i>Weigela</i> | <i>Flowering Almond</i> | <i>Rhododendron</i> | <i>Quince</i> |
| <i>Lilacs</i> | <i>Magnolia</i> | <i>Serviceberry</i> | <i>Deutzia</i> | <i>Fothergilla</i> | <i>Mock Orange</i> |

Is My Tree Bleeding???

Some trees "bleed" or ooze sap when pruned in late winter or early spring. To prevent bleeding, you can prune the following trees after their leaves are fully expanded in late spring or early summer.

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| <i>Maples</i> | <i>Birch</i> | <i>Elms</i> | <i>Dogwood Trees</i> |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|

Re-Bloomers

Re-blooming plants like Bloomerang Lilacs, Sonic Bloom Weigela and several new macrophylla hydrangeas are capable of flowering on both old & new growth. So, the best time to prune them is immediately after their first wave of blooms which occurs on the 'old wood'. This allows you to enjoy their spring display and gives them plenty of time to put on new growth for their summer and fall re-blooming.

Roses

Treat climbers and old garden roses that bloom only once per year the same as other spring-blooming shrubs - prune after they finish blooming.

Repeat bloomers, including hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, miniatures, and modern shrub roses are pruned mostly to shape the plant or to remove winter-damaged canes. If they become overgrown, cut them back in early spring.

Hydrangeas (See Handout)

Bush Berries

The most productive portions of blueberry, gooseberry, and currants are stems that are three years old or less. To maintain a constant supply of productive wood, prune out about a third of the oldest stems on these shrubs after harvest. Cut the old stems off at ground level.

Perennials

Although most perennial flowers will die back to the ground at the end of the season, it's important that you leave the plants alone in fall and instead clean them up in spring – late March/early April. Perennials, including grasses, will utilize their old faded growth to sustain themselves during winter. You can always deadhead perennial flowers after they have faded or finished flowering. Perennial clematis pruning needs will vary depending on variety.

Annuals

If bringing annual material outdoors from your home, be sure to check weather and nighttime temperatures to minimize injury to the plant. Deadhead flowers regularly to promote blooming.

Removing the old flowers will also prevent many annuals from setting seed which allows plants to put more energy into blooming. Some annuals, such as petunias, sprawl and develop bare stems at their bases. As with perennials, you can shear these rangy plants to force more compact growth and renewed blooming.

Fruit Trees

Apples (including crabapples), peaches, pears, plums and cherries should be pruned in late winter or early spring before they wake up from winter dormancy. Although winter pruning removes some of the flower buds, the goal of fruit tree pruning is to thin out the tree to allow more light penetration to inner branches which improves fruit yield.

Dormant pruning is especially important for apples, pears and crabapples because pruning wounds during the growing season expose the trees to the bacterial disease like fire blight.

Target Pruning

This easy-to-follow pruning method focuses on your trees and shrubs. 'Target Pruning' is used to remove material that does not contribute to the overall health or beauty of plants. As dead or diseased wood is removed, the plant's obvious problems are corrected and it becomes easier to assess any additional needs. So, aside from noticeably dead wood...

What should you prune?

Damaged or Diseased Live Wood

Damaged or diseased wood does not contribute to the overall health or beauty of the tree. Removal (at any time) helps the tree recover.

Root Crown Shoots (Suckers)

These shoots emerge from the base of the tree and are often seen as undesirable since they detract from the overall beauty of the tree. They also draw energy from the tree roots to support themselves, thus detracting from the main portion of the tree. These are most often found on grafted trees. Cut these shoots at or below the soil level to divert energy back to the main trunk(s) of the tree.

Rubbing or Crossing Branches

Bark damage can occur when crossing branches grow too close together and rub against each other. This can cause long term problems due to moisture (rot) and insect damage to the tree.

Parallel Leaders

Some single-trunk trees send out multiple competing trunks from the same area as they age. Keep the leader with the nicest structure (typically the original one) and remove the other.

Narrow Crotching Structures

Branches that form tight, small angles emerging from the main trunk are known as 'narrow crotching structures'. This tight angle inhibits the growth of a branch collar and the limb becomes weak and susceptible to damage from wind, ice and heavy snows.

Shade-Out Die Back

The absence of light to the inner branches creates the withdrawal of energy from interior branches and interior 'die back' begins to appear. The tree is simply redirecting energy out to the sunnier tips and is not a sign of disease. Removing this dead wood allows air and sunlight to penetrate the interior of the tree which aids in regrowth and make for a better looking plant.

Tree Recovery for Homeowners

Assess the Damage and Act Accordingly

The Keepers

If damage is relatively slight, prune any broken branches, clean up the torn bark or rough edges around wounds and let the tree begin the process of healing.

Minor Damage

Although the tree has been damaged, enough strong limbs may remain on a basically healthy tree to make saving it possible.



An Easy Call

A mature shade tree can usually survive the loss of one major limb. The broken branch should be pruned back to the trunk collar.



Too Young to Die

Young trees can recover quickly. If the leader and structure for branching is intact, remove the broken branches so the tree can recover.



Wait and See

If a tree appears to be a borderline case, don't simply cut it down. It's best to give the tree some time. A final decision can be made later.

Easy Does It

Resist the temptation to prune too heavily. The tree will need all the foliage it can produce in order to manufacture the food needed to get through to the next growing season.



Hold Off

A healthy, mature tree can recover even when several major limbs are damaged. A professional arborist should assess damage on a borderline tree to safely remove branches.



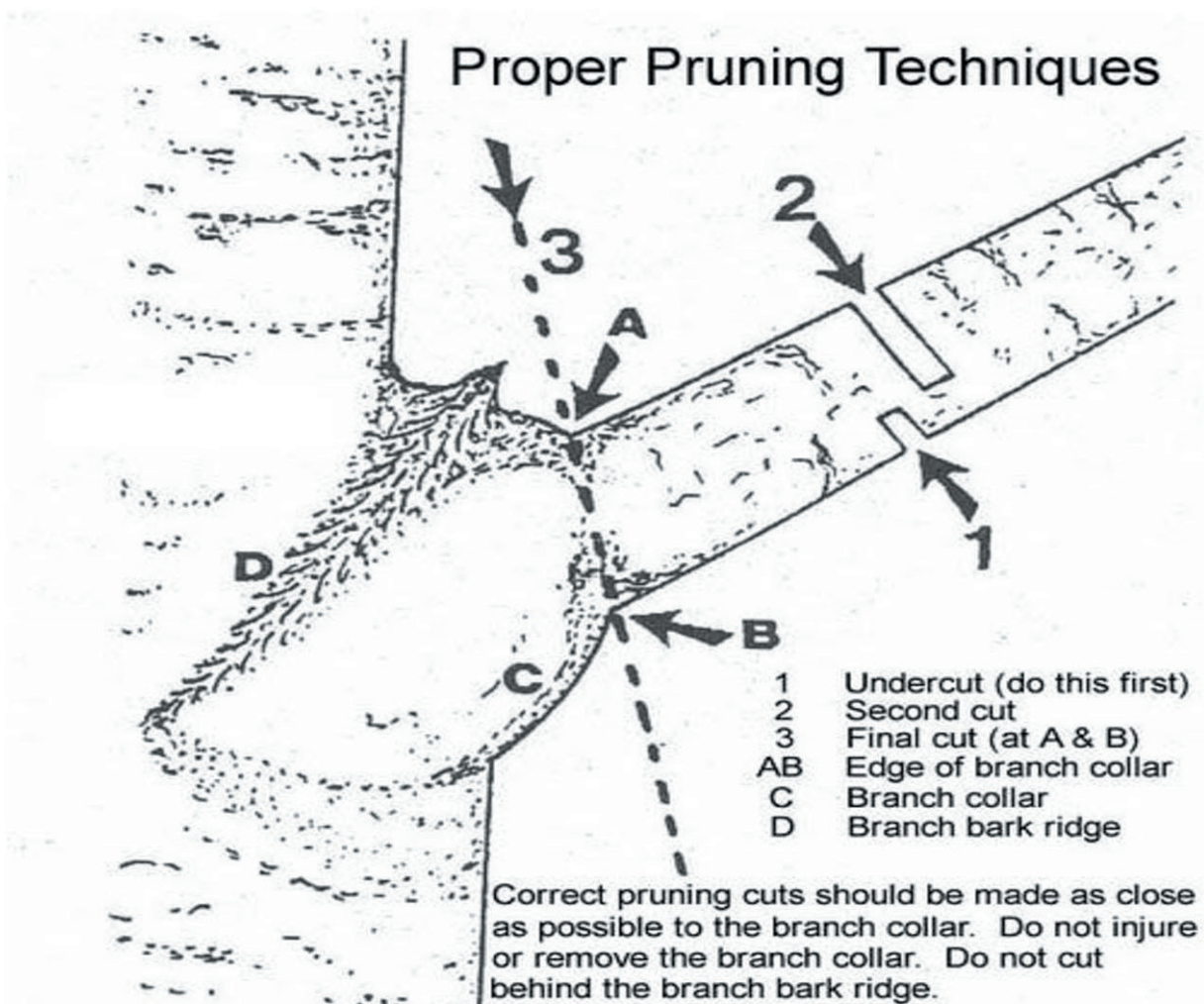
Say Goodbye

Some trees cannot be saved or are not worth saving. If the tree has already been weakened by disease, if the trunk is split or more than 50% of the crown is gone, the tree has lost its survival edge. A rotten inner core inside the trunk can cause a split trunk as well. In this case, the wounds are just too large to mend.



Hopeless Case

All that's left is the trunk. The few remaining branches can't provide enough foliage to enable the tree to survive through another growing season.



Pruning Tool Options

Bypass Hand Pruners

Best choice for close, clean cuts of live branches. Unless they're small, dead wood branches tend to get stuck in the blades and can be a real pain to work with. 'Bypass' pruners come in several sizes but the smaller sizes are good for deadheading roses and smaller flowers.

Bypass Loppers

Great for large, healthy branches up to 2" in caliper. Longer handles give you better leverage with less effort.

Anvil Pruners and Loppers

These have a flat ledge that the blade passes by when pruning. Anvil pruners and loppers work well for dead wood because the jaws don't jam up the way they do with 'bypass' pruners and loppers.

Hand Saws

Great for living or dead wood. Usually used on anything a 'lopper' can't cut. Flex those muscles!

Hedge Shears

Designed to cut larger areas at once. They do tend to create long and straight edges so they work really well for straight sided formal hedges but are tougher to use on rounded shapes.

Pole Pruners

Good for taller branches that are hard to reach from the ground. Use caution when on a ladder.

Maintenance

- 1) Keep tools sharp for good clean cuts that don't tear at the bark.
- 2) Oil pivot points, gears and springs to extend the life of the tool. WD-40 or similar.
- 3) Clean off any dust, sap or water after use. Dry your tools to prevent rust buildup and extend their use.
- 4) To control the spread of diseases while pruning, dip your shears or loppers in rubbing alcohol or bleach and water so you don't inadvertently transfer fungal spores to the rest of your plant or plants.
- 5) Buy quality tools whenever possible. The right one-time purchase can last for a very long time and save you money, time and frustration.