Basic Pruning Techniques for Trees

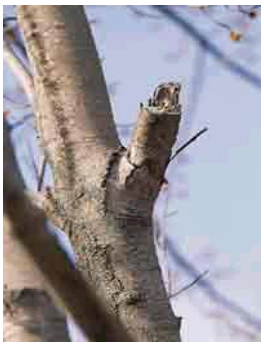
Occasional pruning may be required throughout the life of the tree to remove broken, dead or dying branches; or those interfering with pedestrian or automobile traffic. However, once established, most shade trees need not be pruned on a regular schedule.

Pruning young, established trees:

- A regular pruning schedule should be developed to care for trees. The early years are the most important!
- Early corrective pruning can prevent many of the problems that require extensive repair work in older trees.
- Eliminate undesirable branches while they are young.

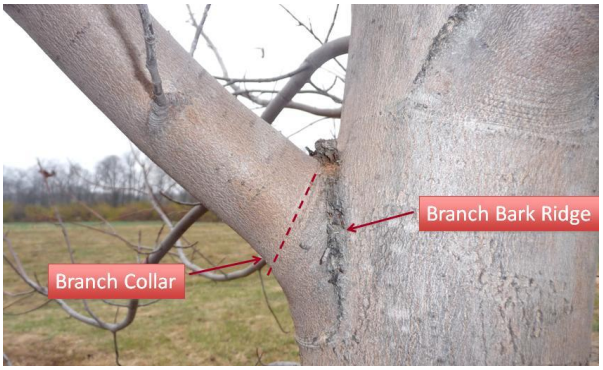
Look for and prune out the following problems:

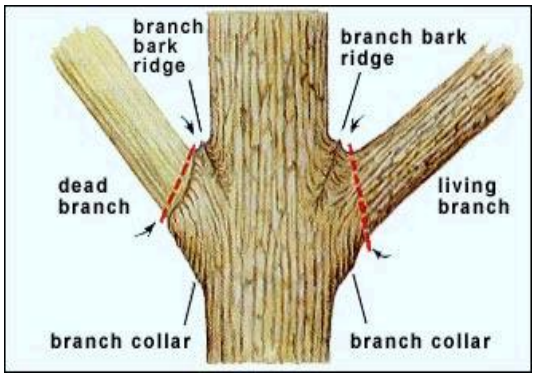
- Dead or dying twigs and branches.
- Sprouts growing near the base of the trunk.
- Crossing and rubbing branches.
- Narrow crotch angles.



When to prune:
When necessary, trees may be pruned at any time of the year, except when the wood is frozen.

How to prune:
There is a standard method of pruning and certain rules and procedures
should be followed to obtain the best results.





Before deciding which branches to remove, always examine the tree carefully. Before making a pruning cut, identify the branch bark ridge and branch collar.
The ***branch bark ridge*** is where the branch and trunk tissue meet. The ***branch collar*** is the swollen area just outside the branch bark ridge.
Without damaging the collar or flush cutting, make clean cuts as close to the remaining branch as possible. Dead branches should be cut back to a living crotch so that healthy tissue surroun
It is very important to avoid tearing the bark from the trunk when pruning. Small branches may be supported by hand to prevent tearing when they are cut off.

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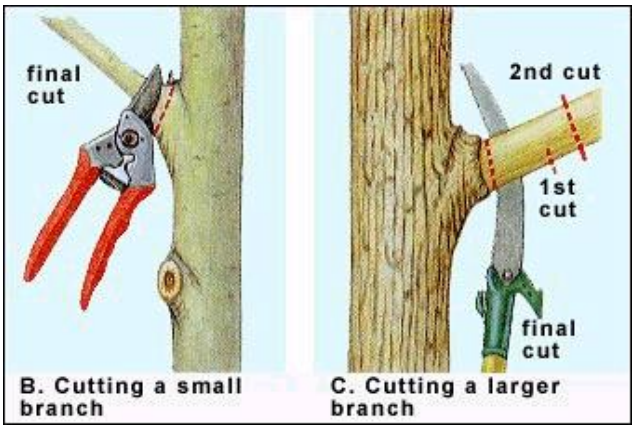
Branches that are too large to be supported by hand must be removed by the ***double-cut method*** to avoid tearing the bark.



To avoid tearing the bark, prune large branches in three cuts. Make the first and second cut about 12 inches from the trunk. Make the third cut along the branch collar or at 45 degrees to the trunk.

Pruning at the branch collar encourages formation of a callus that seals the wound and protects the tree.

Do not use tree wound dressings.

Good pruning cuts to branch collars.

A good pruning cut produces callus tissue around the wound and promotes healing.

Stub from branch left too long will decay and die back.

Flush cut from pruning too close removes branch collar and inhibits healing process.

A poor pruning cut produces a bad wound that facilitates decay and disease.

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