

PRUNING GUIDE AND TECHNIQUES FOR TREES

Pruning is an operation that regulates and corrects growth, flowering, fruiting and rooting. With correct pruning the form of a tree or shrub is determined early in its life.

WHY PRUNE?

For the good of the tree, i.e. health, structure, air circulation.

To benefit the surroundings such as cables in general, street lights, signs, sidewalks, roadway clearance, lawns, flower beds, patios ect.

WHAT TO PRUNING OUT– GENERAL PRUNING

1. Remove any dead wood, broken branches or stubs back to a healthy bud
2. Eliminate tight v – shaped crotches, interfering or crossing branches
3. Prevent a double leader by cutting back all but one leader
4. Remove diseased or insect affected branches
5. Cut back all suckers and long straggly shoots to improve shape
6. Lightly thin out branches to,
 - lighten fruit load
 - increase sunlight penetration
 - improve air circulation
 - improve moisture penetration
 - encourage ripening
 - reduce wind resistance
 - lighten crown
7. Prune no more than 1/3 of the entire tree in one season.

WHEN TO PRUNE

1. Most trees can generally be pruned year round provided a proper technique is used, however, it is easiest to prune when the tree is dormant and all of the branches are visible, February and March.
2. Birches and Maples tend to bleed more if pruned in early spring when the sap is running freely, wait till they are fully leafed out before pruning.
3. The most rapid regrowth response will be obtained by an early spring pruning.
4. Avoid early fall pruning, new tender growth may result which will not have time to harden off before winter.
5. Spring flowering shrubs and trees valued for their flowers, should be pruned after flowering.
6. Summer flowering shrubs and trees valued for their flowers, can be pruned up until early spring as flower buds develop on new growth in early spring.
7. Evergreens should be pruned in June and July. Do not prune evergreens after July 30th.
8. Avoid pruning during excessively cold weather (wood frozen and frost cracking is evident).
9. 'Candling' of pines should be done in early summer as candles are extended but before sheath breaks.
10. Fruit trees are generally pruned in late dormant season.

HOW TO PRUNE

1. Choose the right tool for the job.
2. Tools should be clean and sharp.
3. General pruning to remove dead wood, interference, stubs, broken, weak or diseased wood.
4. Where possible, maintain a central leader.
5. Cuts should be neat and clean, at a proper angle (to allow water to drain off the cut).
6. Always make cuts no more than a ¼ inch above a bud (to a growing point).
7. When removing branches always prune back to main stem.
8. If removing diseased branches disinfect tools between cuts to minimize the spread of infection.
9. With the exception of disinfectants, avoid applying paint or dressings to the wounds. Wounds seal better without it.