



DON'T TOP TREES!

Pruning Guide

Proper pruning is beneficial to a tree's development. This guide is intended to describe how young trees should be pruned. For mature or larger trees it is best to hire a certified arborist.




Why Prune

Proper pruning improves the tree's structural strength, reduces lifetime maintenance costs, and increases the tree's longevity.

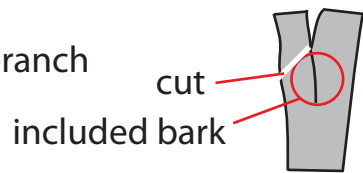
Proper Structure

Radial spacing- no more than 3 branches attached at the same height

Branch Angles

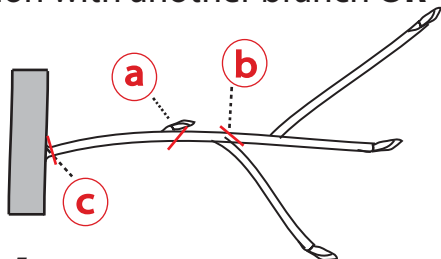
- branches should be about 30° or more apart
-  **10:00 and 2:00 positions are ideal**
- if a branch is attached at a narrow angle to the trunk or another branch, **included bark** may form

- remove the branch



Always cut branch back to a

- a** bud,
- b** connection with another branch **OR**
- c** trunk



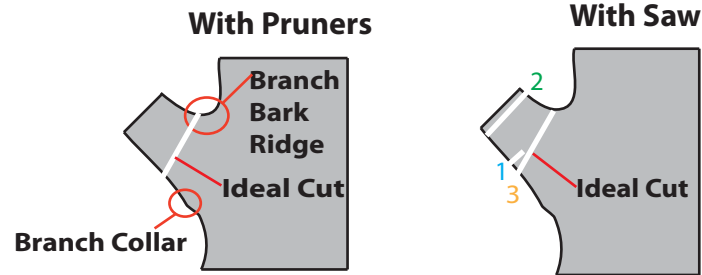
When to Prune

Prune after leaves have fallen or following the coldest part of winter, before buds open. Avoid pruning in summer and fall!

It is ILLEGAL to prune or remove a street tree without a permit. To apply for a permit, contact the city arborist's office at (408) 277-2762 or www.sanjoseca.org.

Making the Proper Cut


Location - cut just outside the branch collar




Equipment - sharp garden pruners are best


- when a branch is too thick for pruners and requires a saw, use the **"3 Step Method:"**
- step 1:** partially cut from beneath
- step 2:** cut several inches above and allow limb to fall
- step 3:** cut just outside the branch collar

Wrong

 **Stub Cut:** removing too little leaves a stub

 **Flush Cut:** cutting too close damages more of the tree

Right

 The Branch Bark Ridge and the Branch Collar are still intact

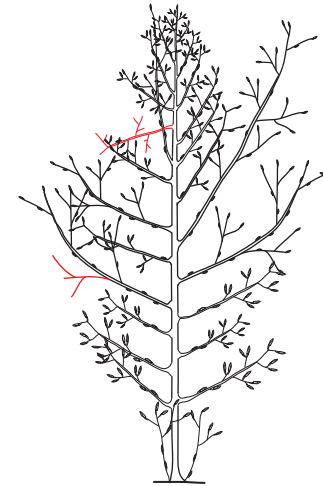
Never Top Trees:

- removing more than 1/3 of a tree's foliage can be fatal
- can make tree more of a potential hazard
- often results in **more** maintenance

5 Step Process

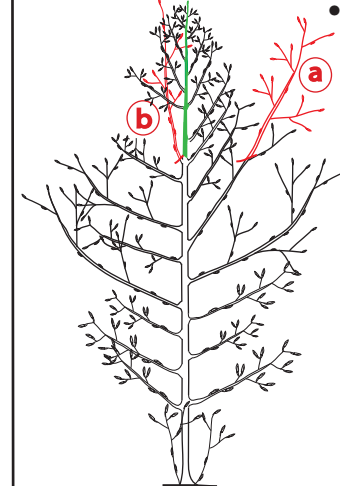
• Never remove more than 25% of a tree's cover

Step 1 - The Four D's



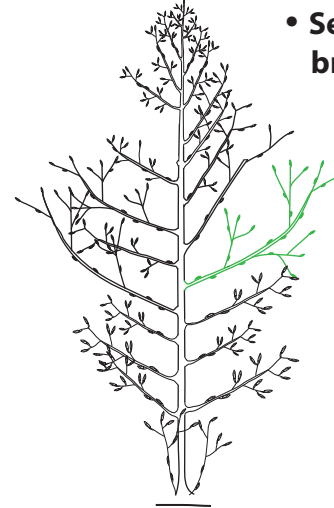
- Remove **dead, dying, damaged, or diseased** branches
- If **unsure tree/branch is alive (use only when necessary):** scratch off a tiny piece of bark; green shows life

Step 2 - Central Leader



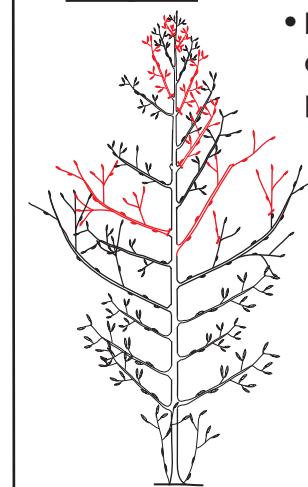
- Select a central leader**- ideally the strongest, tallest, most vertical stem in line with trunk (green)
- remove or cut back competing branches that are:
 - a** higher and thicker than the central leader
 - b** angled too sharply towards the trunk

Step 3 - Lowest Permanent Branch



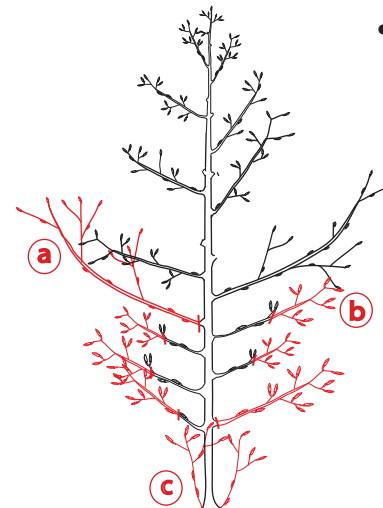
- Select the lowest permanent branch**- a branch at the desired height for clearance:
 - 8' over sidewalks
 - 14' over streets
- branch width should be no more than 1/2 of the trunk's width
- branch should have a good angle of attachment
- branch will stay attached at same height as tree grows

Step 4 - Branch Spacing



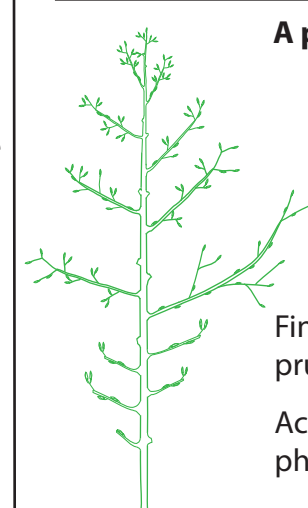
- Remove branches that are too close together **above** the lowest permanent branch:
 - vertical spacing between branches:**
 - 18" or more for large trees
 - 12" for small trees
 - radial spacing (see front):** no more than 3 branches at any height
- remove branches that cross each other or point towards trunk

Step 5 - Temporary Branches



- Temporary branches** - branches below the lowest permanent branch that will be removed in the coming years
 - a** remove branches that are thicker than 1/3 of the trunk's width
 - b** prune back smaller temporary branches to 3 or 4 buds
 - c** remove suckers from the base of the trunk

Finished Tree



A permit is required to:

- prune or remove a **street tree** (located 10' from the curb)
- remove a yard tree with a diameter greater than 18"
- remove designated Heritage Trees

Fines up to \$3,000 may apply for pruning without a permit.

Acquiring a permit is just one phone call away!

Call (408) 277-2762 or visit www.sanjoseca.org

