Proper Tool Selection

Well-sharpened by-pass pruners should be used rather than anvil pruners. Anvil pruners may crush tender tissue. Hand saws are very useful for limbs too large for pruners.

Using a chainsaw on very small branches often leads to bark damage. Never attempt to use a chain saw without reading the manual, obtaining qualified instructions, and wearing the appropriate personal protection equipment (hard hat, hearing and eye protection, chaps, and steel toed boots).

Improper Pruning Practices

A Flush cut is created by removal of a branch inside the branch collar. This cut is flush with the trunk leaving a large wound which invites insects, fungi, and diseases.

Lion-tailing is the removal of all branches in the interior portion of the canopy, leaving small branches and leaves at the tip of the branch instead of even distribution of branches and leaves along the full length of the limb. The branch needs the leaves to supply the tree with carbohydrates produced in photosynthesis.

Topping is the indiscriminate removal of branches between internodes and not where branches meet. The tree responds by producing many sprouts at the point of the cut.

Mainly used on shrubs, shearing is a technique that creates a flat-topped plant (or tree) that ignores its natural growth.

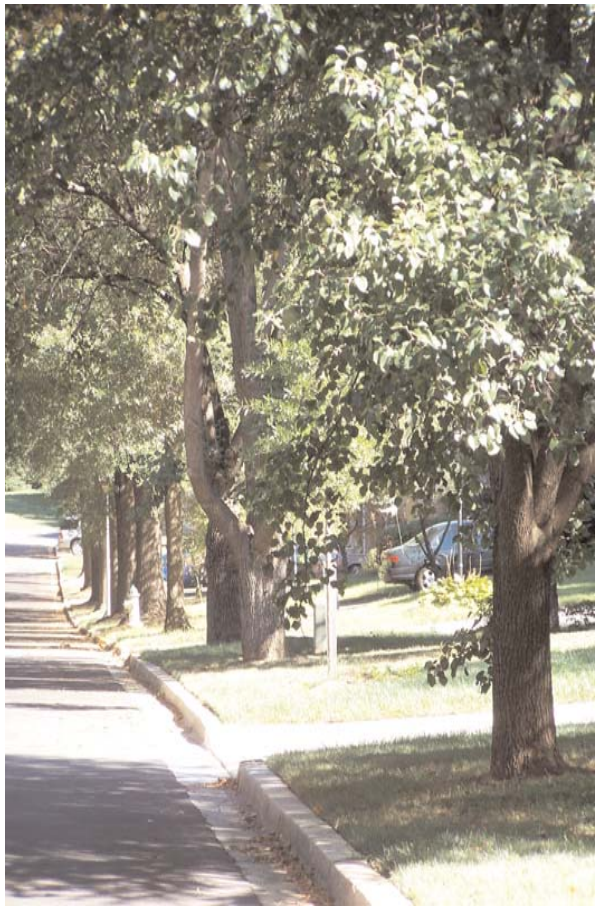
Wound paint is material used to cover a wound. It creates a moist and dark environment between the paint and the wound that is perfect for fungi and diseases.

The College Park Tree and Landscape Board encourages citizens to adopt practices that promote and protect healthy trees, shrubs and ground cover on private land. To learn more about the Tree & Landscape board, view our website at www.collegeparkmd.gov/tree_and_landscape_board.htm.

The information that appears in this brochure was reprinted from Trees Need a Proper Start—Prune Them Right, *by Rita McKenzie and Harvey Holt, Urban Forestry Specialists in the department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue University. It appears here with the authors' permission.*

Created 04/2009

How to Prune Trees

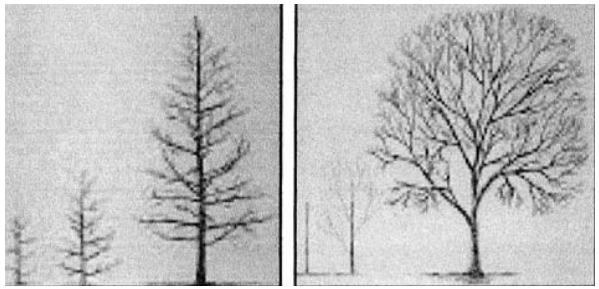


Brought to you by the College Park Tree and Landscape Board

Why Prune?

The objective of pruning is to produce strong, healthy, attractive plants. The main reasons for pruning ornamental and shade trees include safety, health, and aesthetics. In addition, pruning can be used to stimulate fruit production and spur growth.

The shape of a tree is determined by genetics. Trees with a central stem, for example, have a pyramid shape pattern called excurrent growth. Round shaped



Excurrent growth Decurrent growth

trees have a decurrent growth pattern. The pruner should consider these natural shapes before beginning the job. A properly pruned tree should maintain its natural shape.

Understanding tree biology, knowing important terms, and using this information when pruning produces properly pruned trees.

Pruning Terms

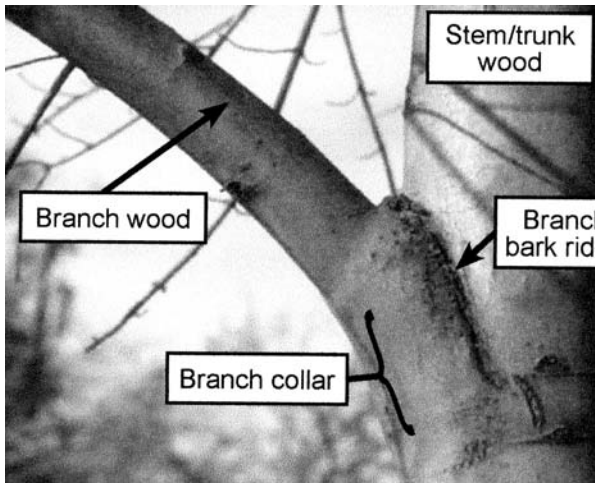
Proper pruning is the removal of a branch where two branches meet or at a **node.**

The **branch collar** is the area just below the junction where two branches meet. Stem wood and branch wood intersect at this point.

A **branch bark ridge** is the raised area located in the junction where two branches meet.

Stem or trunk wood forms as the trunk or stem grows in diameter.

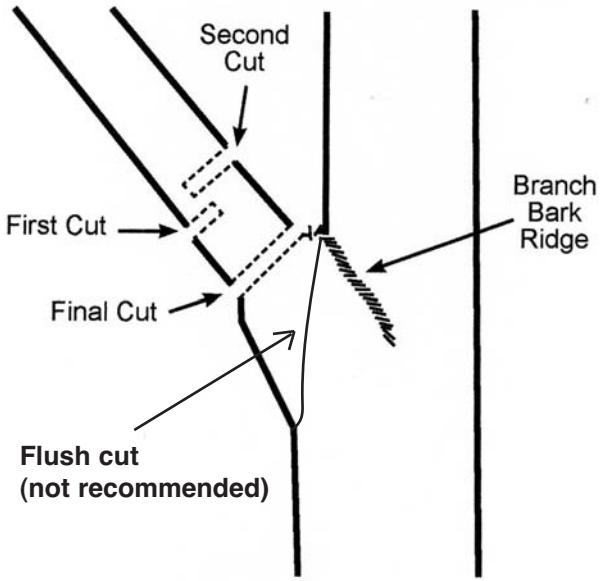
Branch wood forms as an individual branch grows in length and diameter.
Node is the point on the branch from



where a leaf or flower grows.

An **internode** is the space between nodes.

CODIT (Compartmentalization of Decay in Trees) is the tree's natural process of walling off or compartmentalizing wounds to prevent decay from spreading into the tree from the point of the wound.



How to Remove a Branch

First Cut: About 1 foot from the point where two branches meet, make a cut about 1⁄3 of the way through the underside of the branch. This cut prevents the bark from tearing when the second cut is made. Torn bark can leave a large wound on the trunk, which invites insects and disease.

Second Cut: About 2–3 inches above the first cut, cut through the branch. This will remove branch weight in preparation for the final cut.

Final Cut: Remove the remaining stub by cutting just outside the branch collar. If a stub is left on the tree, it may become an entrance point for insects, disease, and fungi.