MOSCOW TREE COMMISSION

Ellis Eifert
Commission Chair

David Schott
Staff Liaison

tree@ci.moscow.id.us

208.883.7098

Regular Meeting
~Agenda~

https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/557/Tree-Commission

Tuesday **December 2, 2025**	**5:00 PM**	**Mayors Conference Room** **206 E 3rd Street**

WELCOME AND ATTENDANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **Approval of Moscow Tree Commission November 4, 2025, Minutes (ACTION ITEM) – Ellis Eifert**

   Presentation of minutes for approval.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve minutes as presented; approve minutes with amendments; or provide staff with further directions.

2. **Public Comment and Response to Previous Comments (limited to 15 minutes)**

   Members of the public may speak to the Commission regarding matters NOT on the agenda or currently pending before the Commission. Please state your name and city of residence for the record and limit your remarks to three (3) minutes.

3. **Consideration of the Tree Service Pruning Education Presentation (ACTION ITEM) – David Rauk**
   David Rauk has spearheaded the development of a draft "Proper Tree Pruning for Shade and Ornamental Trees" as an educational tool for our current and future tree contactors licensed to do tree work within the city for a fee.

   The commission will discuss the draft content of the educational material as presented. If approved, staff will polish and finalize the educational pruning materials.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the draft content of the tree contractor educational materials; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

4. **Consideration of the Spring 2027 Arbor Day Seedlings (ACTION ITEM) – Ellis Eifert – David Schott**
   The Tree Commission will discuss options for the 2027 Arbor Day celebration. The commission gives away tree seedlings at the first Farmers Market each year as part of Arbor Day.

   The Pitkin Nursery has responded to the Tree Commission's request for Red Flowing Current, Incense Cedar, Native Mountain Ash, and European Beech. They should have the Incense Cedar, Mountain Ash, and European Beech but are unable to get seeds for Red Flowering Current.

The nursery has suggested Sticky Current as an alternative for the Red Flowering Current. They also have other species not in the current catalog: Buckhorn Cascara, Black Elderberry, English Walnut, and Sugar Pine.

The commission will discuss alternatives for the Red Flowering Current.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the seedling list for the 2027 Arbor Day celebration; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

UPDATES/REPORTS

1. **Moscow Garden Club of Latah County Presentation – David Rauk**

UPCOMING EVENTS / MEETINGS

1. **Next Tree Commission Meeting: January 6, 2026**

ADJOURN

NOTICE: It is the policy of the City of Moscow that all City-sponsored public meetings and events are accessible to all people. If you need assistance in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability under the ADA, please contact the City's ADA Coordinator by phone at (208) 883-7600, TDD (208) 883-7019, or by email at adacoordinator@ci.moscow.id.us at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation. The City of Moscow is committed to ensuring that all reasonable accommodation requests are fulfilled.

MOSCOW TREE COMMISSION

Ellis Eifert
Commission Chair

David Schott
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208.883.7098

Regular Meeting
~Minutes~

https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/557/Tree-Commission

Tuesday **November 4, 2025**	**5:00 PM**	**Mayors Conference Room** **206 E 3rd Street**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.
PRESENT: Ellis Eifert (Chair); David Rauk (Vice Chair); Mary Jo Hamilton; Jeanne Leffingwell; Pam Brunsfield; Mark Heinlien, Ben Coons

STAFF: Gina Taruscio (Council Liaison); David Schott (Staff Liaison)

WELCOME AND ATTENDANCE

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **Approval of Moscow Tree Commission September 2, 2025 Minutes (ACTION ITEM) – Ellis Eifert**

   Presentation of minutes for approval.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve minutes as presented; approve minutes with amendments; or provide staff with further direction.

   Mary Jo moved to approve the minutes as presented. Pam seconded.

   Roll call vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Abstain: Motion carried.

2. **Public Comment and Response to Previous Comments (limited to 10 minutes).**

   Cynthia King, from the Moscow Report, will be attending meetings for their online news site.

3. **Consideration of the Tree Service Certification General Knowledge Test Questions (ACTION ITEM) – David Rauk / David Schott**
   It is unlawful for any person to engage in the business of planting, pruning, or removing a public tree or shrub for a fee without being licensed as required by City Code.

   Any Tree Service Contractor engaged in the business of tree service for a fee shall obtain a license from the Administrator. Such a license requires the contractor or at least one employee of the business or owner to possess a Tree Service Certification as required by City Code.

   As one part of the Tree Service Certification, the applicant must complete a written examination to be administered by the Administrator.

The Tree Commission will review the revised draft test questions for the General Knowledge exam.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the general knowledge test questions; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

Mark would like to add more pruning questions to the test. The group reviewed the test questions and made changes. They would like to emphasize pruners on the "why" to prune rather than "how". A short PowerPoint review is sent out to current tree contractors every year as a refresher.

Mark moves to approve the changes to the test, David R. seconded.

Roll call vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Abstain: Motion carried.

4. **Consideration of Moscow Garden Club of Latah County Presentation (ACTION ITEM) – David Rauk**
   Tree Commission member, David Rauk, has been invited by the Moscow Garden Club to present on behalf of the Moscow Tree Commission to the club on November 12, 2025. David Rauk will describe the event to the commission.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve David Rauk presenting at the Moscow Garden Club of Latah County November 12, 2025, meeting; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

   David R. will give a short presentation to the group on the Tree Commission's mission and work they are active in.

   Mary Jo approves David R. giving the presentation; Pam seconded.

   Roll call vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Abstain: Motion carried.

5. **Consideration of the Fall 2026 Farmers Market Seedling Giveaway (ACTION ITEM) – Ellis Eifert – David Schott**
   The Tree Commission will discuss options for the 2026 fall seedling giveaway at the Farmers Market. The Pitkin Nursery has requested the Tree Commission's seedling list to allow time to propagate any seedling requests. The budget approved in FY2026 is $500.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the seedling list for the 2026 fall Farmers Market; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

   Group reviewed the list and selected for fall 2026: Elderberry, Blue; Lilac; White, Common; Hackberry, Western; and Scouler's Willow.

   Mark moves to accept the four chosen seedlings; David R. seconded

   Roll call vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Abstain: Motion carried.

6. **Consideration of the Spring 2027 Arbor Day Seedlings (ACTION ITEM) – Ellis Eifert – David Schott**
   The Tree Commission will discuss options for the 2027 Arbor Day celebration. The commission gives away tree seedlings at the first Farmers Market each year as part of Arbor Day. The Pitkin Nursery has requested the Tree Commission's species list to allow time to propagate any seedling requests. Moscow City Council has not considered and approved the FY2027 budget but historically the budget supports $750 towards Arbor Day seedlings.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the seedling list for the 2027 Arbor Day celebration; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

Group reviewed the list and narrowed it down to: Current, Red Flowering; Cedar, Incense; Native Mountain Ash; and European Beech.

David R. moves to accept the four chosen seedlings; Ben seconded

Roll call vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Abstain: Motion carried.

7. **Consideration of the 2026 Arbor Day Theme (ACTION ITEM) – Ellis Eifert – David Rauk**
   Ellis Eifert, David Rauk and David Schott met with the UI to discuss the 2026 partnership between the City and UI for the 2026 Arbor Day celebration. Ellis and David R. will provide an update to the commission. The commission will then discuss ideas on an overall theme for the celebration to present to the UI.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve 2026 Arbor Day overall theme to present to the University of Idaho; or take other action as deemed appropriate.

   Group reviewed previous year's celebration activities. David said a site has not been finalized. The theme chosen was, Planting trees for future generations.

   David R. moves to accept the theme; Mark seconded**.**

   Roll call vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Abstain: Motion carried.

UPDATES/REPORTS

1. **9/25 Farmers Market Seedling Giveaway Report – All**
   Went well, ponderosa pine went slower than the others.

2. **Tree Cookie Workshop Update – Jeanne / Pam**
   Group is preparing for the workshop first weekend in December.

3. **Annual Report to City Council - Ellis**
   All members were there for the report.

UPCOMING EVENTS / MEETINGS

ADJOURN The meeting was adjourned at 6 PM

_____

Ellis Eifert, Chair *(or stamped by Deputy City Clerk)*

Proper Tree Pruning for Shade and Ornamental Trees

A Review for the Tree Care Contractor

City of Moscow
Parks and Recreation

Purpose of review

This review will help the contractor to assess how well he/she is aligning with current pruning techniques and methods specified by industry standards and the city of Moscow - it should be viewed at least annually. A review can also reach out to contractors about changes and updates concerning tree pruning. This review can be found in the city of Moscow's Community Forestry website:
https://www.ci.moscow.id.us › Community-Forestry

Reference material used for this review came from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) 4th edition, Arborists' Study Guide.
https://wwv.isa-arbor.com/store/product/7/cid/17/

The techniques and methods described in this review have been developed over a century by primarily two organizations, the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA). And they have been adopted by the American National Standards Institute. More information is provided at the end of this review.

Outline

- Tree biology and architecture
- Pruning objectives
- Pruning cuts
- Amount and timing of pruning
- ANSI A300
- International Society of Arboriculture
- Tree Care Industry

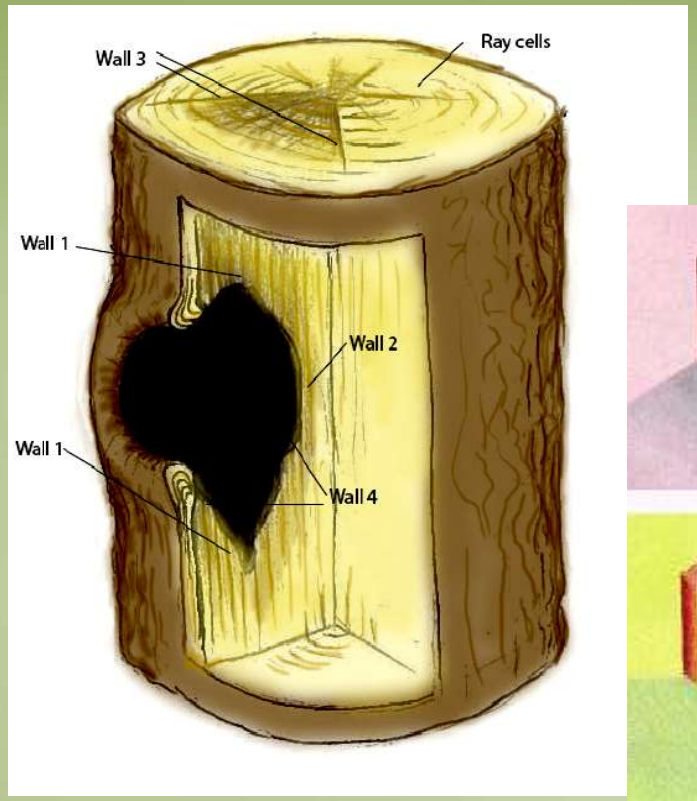
Tree Biology and Architecture

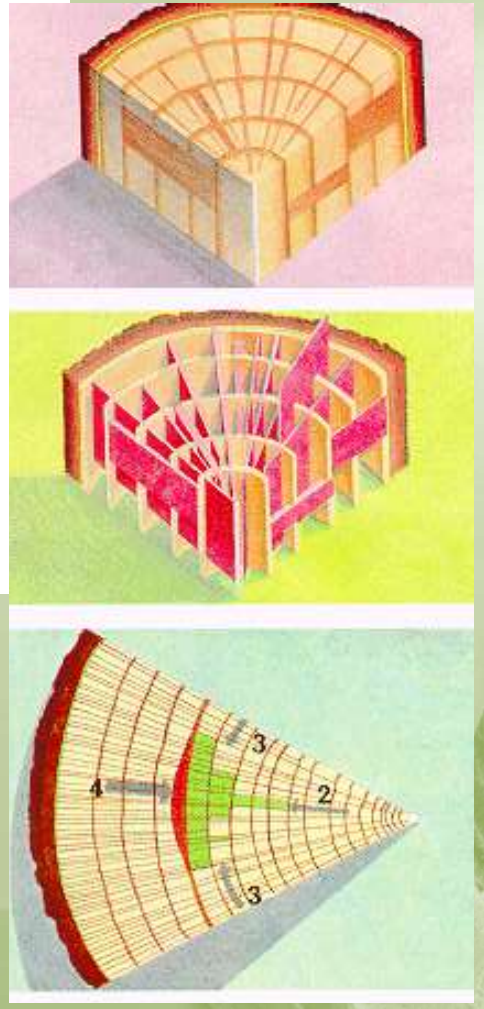
Pruning performed properly reduces risk, provides clearance, improves tree structure, health, and appearance. It is vital that arborists understand the biology of trees and how trees respond and recover from pruning.

Cause and Effect:

- Most of a tree's energy (sugar) is stored in the tree's wood.
- Removing live branches from a tree reduces this stored energy.
- Removing foliage reduces the tree's ability to photosynthesize. This is critical to know when pruning stressed trees. Keep the foliage!
- Tree wounds provide access for decay organisms to enter and spread within the tree.
- Pruning creates wounds that impacts a tree's stored energy, its ability to make energy, and its defenses against decay.

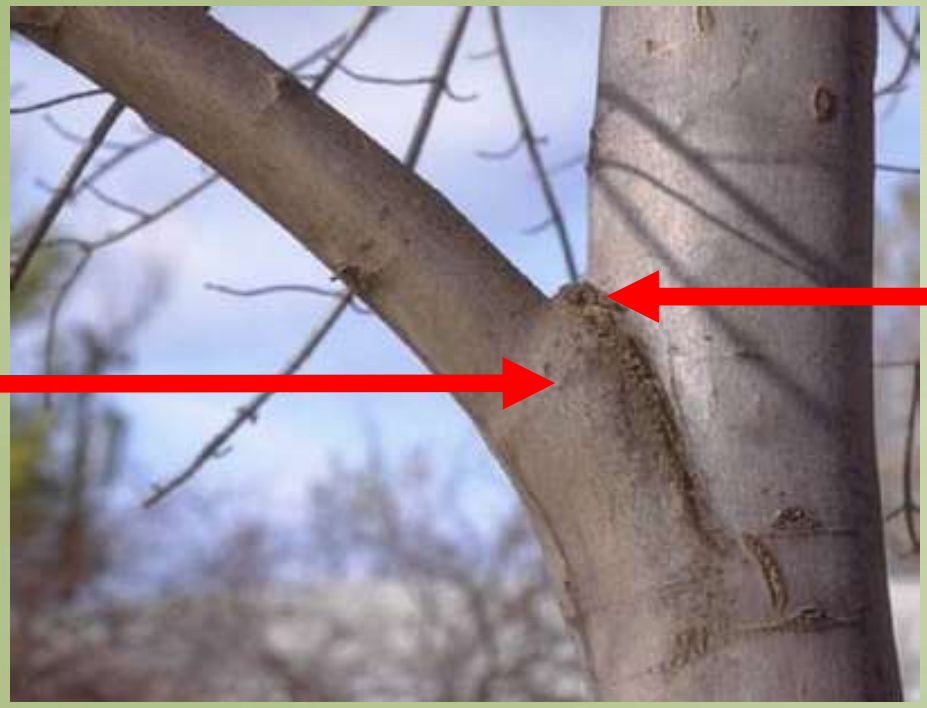
Decay is a tree's worst enemy. A tree uses a process called **compartmentalization** that limits the spread of decay based on physical and chemical properties of the live wood. Walls are formed around a wound in an attempt to close off the decay and prevent further spread.





Pruning wounds need to be contained in this manner. When <u>too much</u> live wood and foliage is removed during a pruning operation, stored energy and the tree's ability to make more energy are compromised. An already-stressed tree could be seriously impacted.

When branches remain small relative to the trunk diameter, a swollen **branch collar** develops around the base of where the branch connects to the trunk/stem. A "stem" is an extension of trunk tissue, where the trunk divides into scaffolding sections.



<u>The tissue within the branch collar is rich in energy reserves and chemicals that hinder the spread of decay.</u>

Pruning Objectives

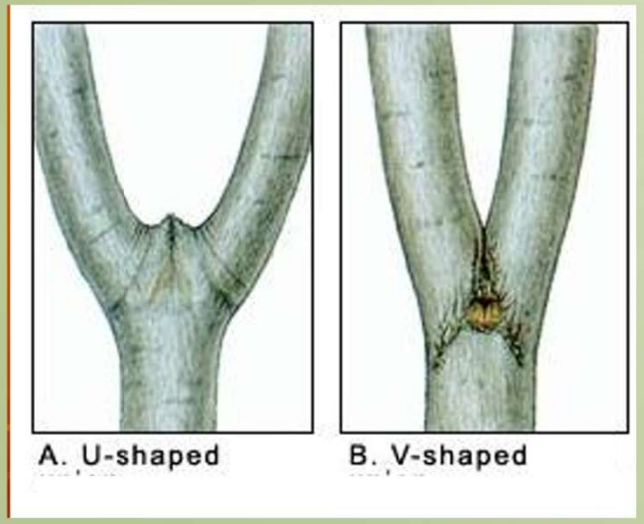
No tree should be pruned without a clearly defined objective. Below are the six main pruning objectives. The three, highlighted below, will be further discussed in this presentation.

- Improving structure
- Reducing risk
- Providing clearance
- Managing crown size
- Reducing crown density
- Restoring structure

More information about all these objectives can be found in the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) 4th edition, Arborists' Study Guide. https://wwv.isa-arbor.com/store/product/7/cid/17/

Strong tree and branch structure is important for reducing the future likelihood of failure. And identifying **codominant stems** is one of the crucial steps in **improving structure**. Codominant stems are the result of a trunk that divides into two (rarely more) equally-sized trunks. The union created is weakly attached, especially when **included bark** is present.

Included bark

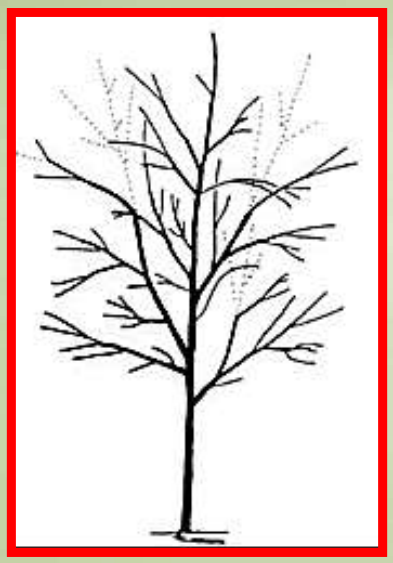


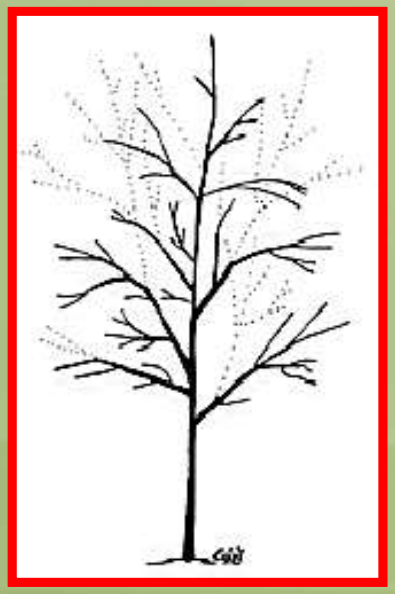
Notice "A" has a bark ridge which indicates some added strength. Nonetheless, a weak union.

"B" is a very weak union. Has included bark and no bark ridge.

Improving the structure of a tree is best started when the tree is young (called "**training**"). And one of the best techniques for improving structure is to correct weak branch unions.

On most young trees, there should be only one leader which is usually the strongest, most vertical stem. To promote and maintain a single leader, weaker codominant stems should be **subordinated** (reduced in length to become laterals with slower growth) or removed.

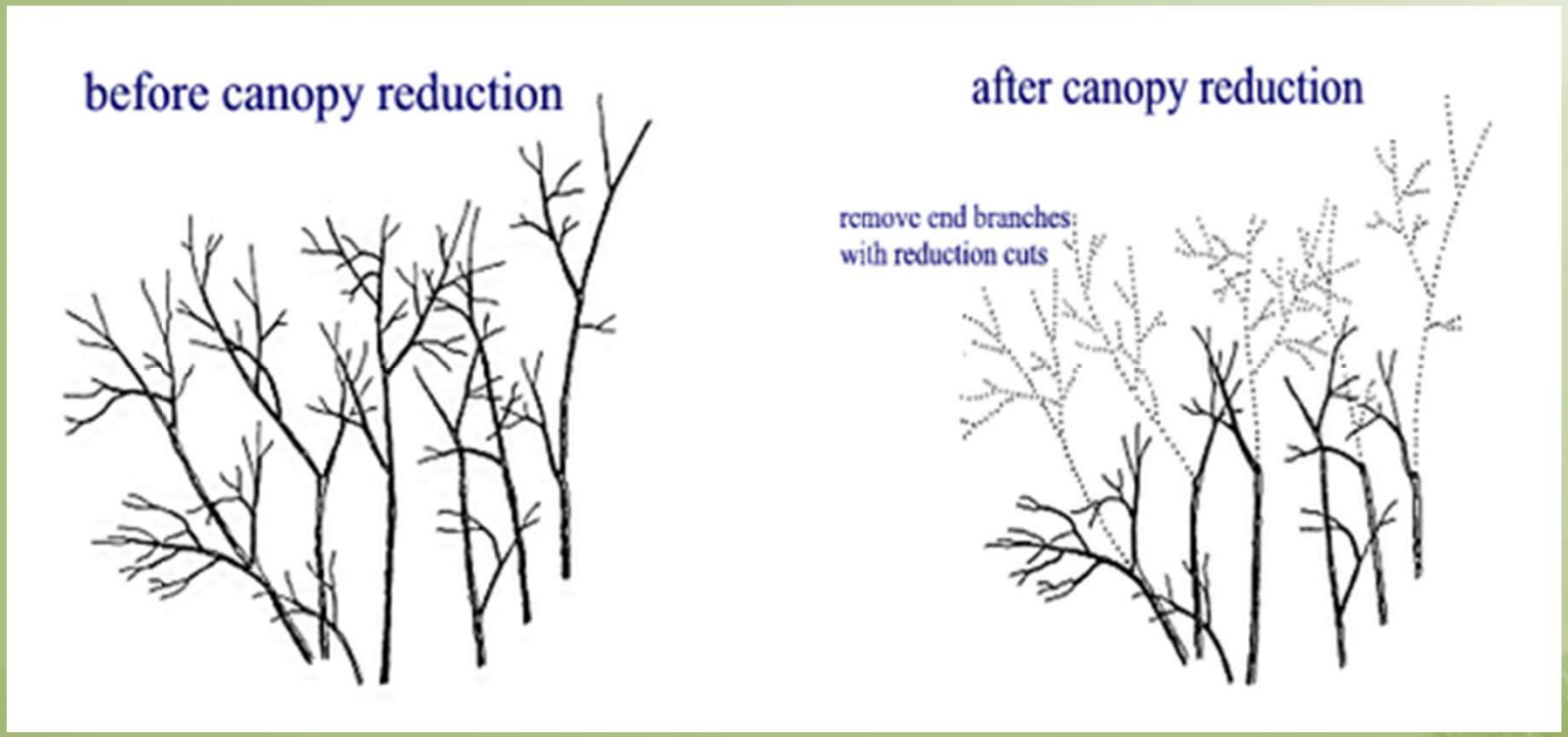




Further pruning creates well-spaced scaffold branching while clustered, weakly attached branches are removed or subordinated.

Failure to correct codominant stems during a tree's early years can result in the loss of that tree as well as major property damage or personal injury.

Sometimes the crown of a tree must be reduced in height or spread to clear structures/objects**.** **Managing crown size** is accomplished with reduction cuts or, rarely, heading cuts (both described later). The size of the cuts should be as small as possible to reduce the likelihood of decay within those cuts. Do not leave stubs, large or small!



Topping a tree to reduce its height and/or spread is an unacceptable practice. It is defined as the indiscriminate cutting back of live branches and leaders to internodal stubs.

Topping disregards long-term health and structural integrity. A tree's structure is weakened by forcing the growth of poorly-attached **watersprouts** and creating large wounds that lead to decay. Over time, the likelihood of large branch failure increases. Topping also removes a majority of a tree's energy-producing source (foliage) thereby starving the tree.

Weakly attached sprouts proliferate near the stubs after topping.

Significant decay can develop within the stubs.

Reducing crown density, or thinning, is often thought to increase wind or light penetration. However, the removal of live interior and lower lateral branches should be performed with much caution. Too much thinning reduces the tree's ability to dissipate wind energy and thus, increases the overall force on the trunk and roots. **Lion tailing** is a term used to describe the effect of removing an excessive number of interior branches leaving foliage only at the ends of branches. Energy-producing foliage is lost and the center of gravity of a stem is raised making it top heavy and more prone to failure during high winds and heavy wet snows.

- A tree produces watersprouts on its trunk and main stems as a response to stress such as excessive pruning. To regain photosynthetic energy, the tree activates dormant buds to grow rapidly. It is a sign of improper, excessive pruning!

- To allow more sunlight to penetrate the crown, peripheral crown thinning can be performed, but not entire-tree thinning.

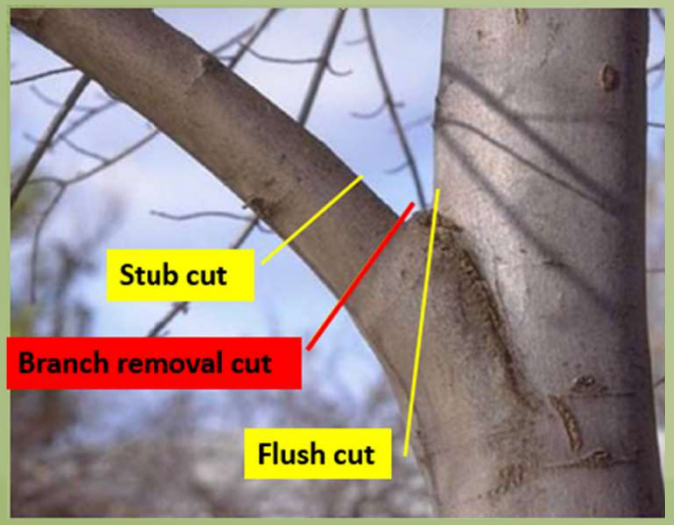
- To help prevent wind damage, reduce the length of overextended, long, and/or largest branches and weak or poorly attached branches.

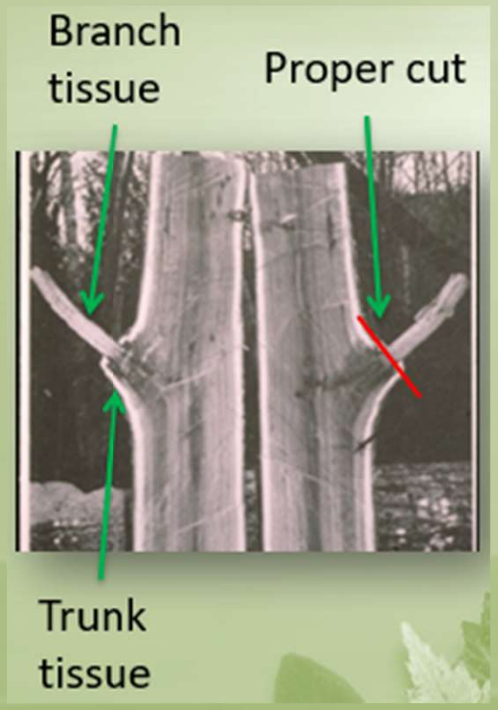
- The more effective and less damaging way to allow additional sunlight to reach the ground under a tree is to selectively remove the lowest branches of the tree's crown.

Pruning Cuts

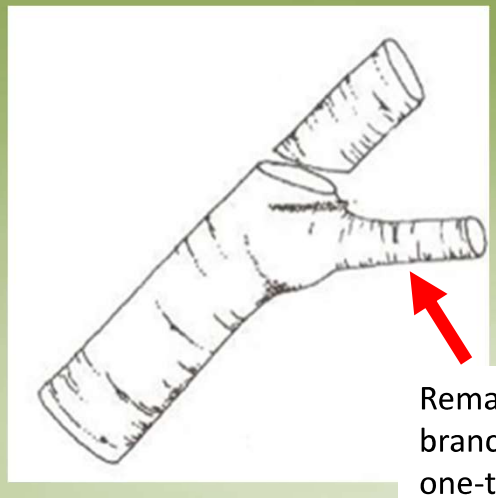
There are three types of pruning cuts and are typically classified by where they are made on the branch or stem.

Branch Removal Cut. A cut that removes the smaller of two stems at their union, such as the removal of a branch from the trunk or a lateral branch from its parent. The cut should be made just outside the branch collar. A **flush cut** removes the branch collar and a **stub cut** prevents the cut from closing – both allow decay to spread rapidly.



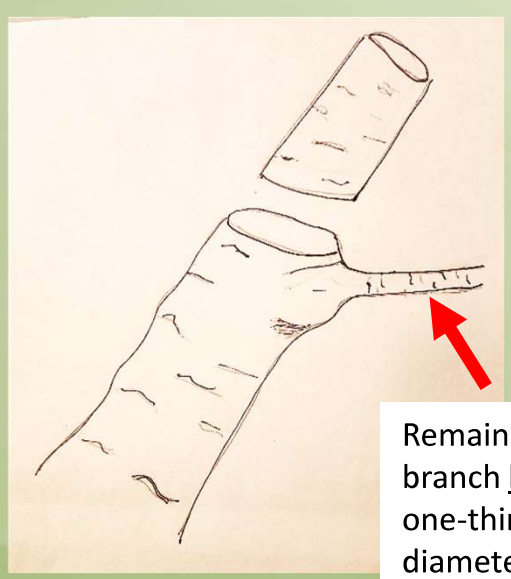


Reduction Cut. A cut that removes the larger of two or more branches/stems, preferably at least one-third the diameter of the branch being removed. Reduction pruning is often used for reducing the length of a branch/stem.



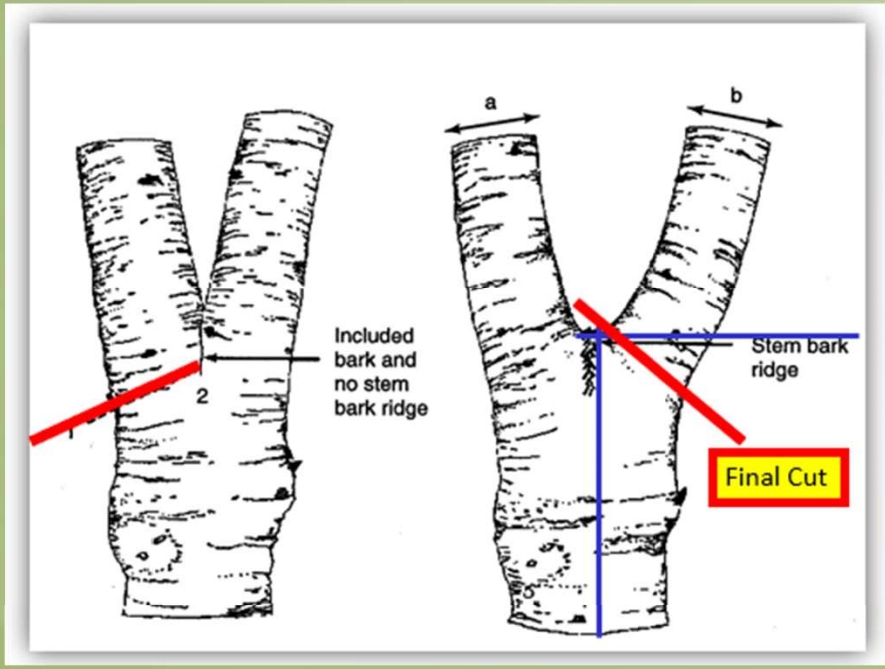
Remaining branch at least one-third the diameter of removed branch

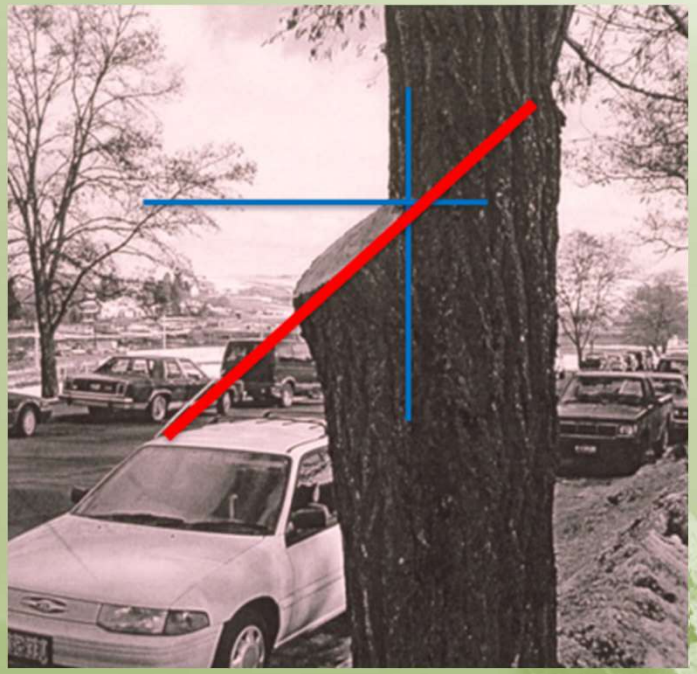
Heading Cut. A cut that removes a branch/stem back to a branch less than one-third the diameter of the branch/stem being removed, or infrequently, back to a bud or between nodes. The larger wound created from this type of pruning cut will enable decay pathogens to more easily invade the stem. On trees under stress or in decline, avoid reduction cuts as they can accelerate the decline. Healthy trees severely damaged by a storm can be partially restored using this type of cut. These cuts are also used in crown reduction.



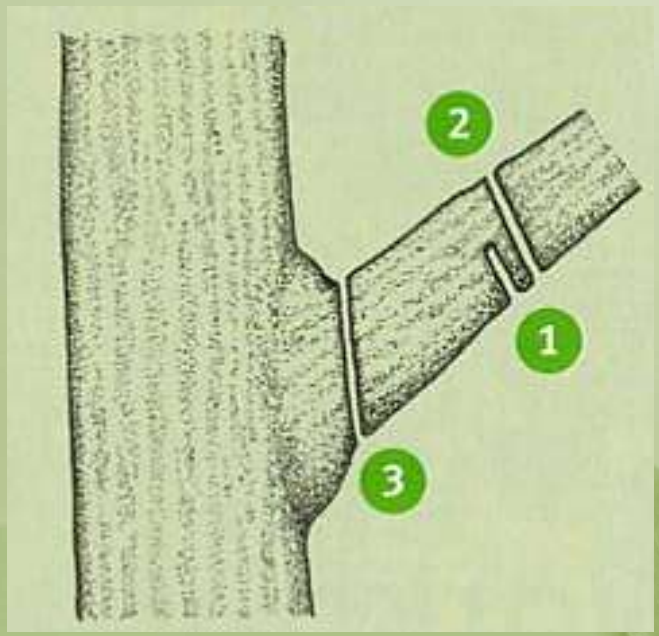
Remaining branch less than one-third the diameter of removed branch

To prune a codominant stem, select one stem to become the main leader and either remove the other entirely or reduce it gradually over several years (subordinate) by making cuts back to a smaller side branch. For young trees, a single cut is often sufficient, while for older trees, a progressive reduction is less stressful. In many cases, a guideline is to use an approximate 45-degree angle for the final cut.





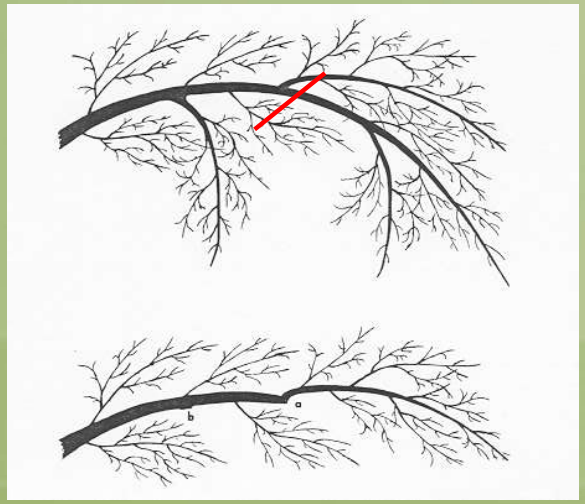
Branches that are too large to be supported by hand should be removed using the **three-cut method** to avoid tearing or splitting the bark and damaging the branch protection zone. The first cut is an undercut made about 6 – 12 inches from the branch collar. The second cut or top cut is made outside the undercut. With the weight of the branch removed, the third and final cut is made just outside the branch collar.



Amount and Timing of Pruning

- **Young and mid-aged healthy trees** can tolerate the removal of a higher percentage of living tissue better than mature trees. Generally, guidelines suggest no more than 15 - 25% of the live crown should be removed per year. Stored energy reserves that can be used for wound closure from pruning cuts are usually greater in these trees.

- **Mature and Over-mature trees** have very limited stored energy reserves since less foliage on the trees needs to support large amounts of live wood. Remove no more than 10% of the live crown per year. Energy reserves are used mostly for maintenance, not defense or growth. A key is to retain as much live foliage as possible!



Here are two more guidelines on the amount of pruning:

Two-Thirds Rule:
After pruning, at least 1/2 of the tree's foliage should originate in the lower 2/3 of the tree. This practice ensures a strong, tapered trunk and retains foliage that distributes stress evenly throughout the crown, preventing the tree from becoming top-heavy and having a greater likelihood of failure.

One Fourth Rule. When a branch is pruned, no more than one-fourth (25%) of the remaining branch's foliage should be removed. Energy from the foliage first supports the immediate needs of the branch, then any surplus moves to other branches, the trunk and roots.

Guidelines for the timing of pruning:

- Routine pruning can occur any time of the year for removal of deadwood, broken branches, and hazardous branches/stems just discovered.

- Late spring and early-mid summer is best for extensive pruning, after leaves are fully expanded and energy is at peak production. Trees are actively growing and wound closure occurs more quickly.

- Winter, when the tree is dormant, is also a good time for pruning. The framework of the tree is visible and not blocked by foliage.

- Avoid extensive pruning when tree is low on energy reserves, mostly in early-mid spring, during or right after flowering/flush of growth and when the tree is significantly stressed from environmental or biotic problems. Also avoid extensive pruning during the fall when a tree is entering dormancy.

- Avoid pruning (creating wounds/releasing defensive chemicals) when insect or disease pests, such as Dutch elm disease, bronze birch borer, mountain pine beetle, fireblight, etc. are most active in transmission.

Summary page

- Prune with an objective in mind!
- Keep interior and low branches/foliage as much as possible.
- Training a tree for better structure when young provides the best outcome for future growth. Resolve codominant stem problems early in the tree's life.
- Decay is a tree's worst enemy, minimize pruning (wounding) as much as possible.
- Retain the branch collar when removing branches.
- Do not top or liontail a tree!
- Prune a mature tree lightly and limit the amount of live, energy-producing foliage removed. It needs all the energy it can make.

ANSI A300 Standard for tree pruning

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a private, non-profit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standards and conformity assessment system. ANSI works in close collaboration with stakeholders from industry and government to identify and develop standards, consensus, and solutions to national and global priorities.

The International Society of Arboriculture among others have developed companion publications to help interpret tree-care related ANSI standards and provide guidance to practitioners for a variety of tree and shrub maintenance practices. A specific standard, ANSI 300, addresses tree pruning.

For more information, please visit the following link:
https://www.ansi.org

International Society of Arboriculture

Who are they

Through its research, technology, and education, the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) promotes the professional practice of arboriculture and fosters a greater worldwide awareness of the benefits of trees. Professional, individual members include practicing arborists, consulting arborists, researchers, educators, and those involved in urban forestry and utility arboriculture.
For more information, please visit the following link:
https://www.isa-arbor.com

There are 21 U.S. and 34 international chapters. Total membership is about 50,000 and over 35,000 are ISA Certified Arborists. The ISA Certified Arborist is one of several credentials earned by members.

What is an ISA Certified Arborist?

The ISA Certified Arborist designation sets one apart as someone with the commitment, dedication, and knowledge to succeed. It provides clients with confidence in their expertise much like what a journeyman electrician's license does for an electrician. ISA Certified Arborists are sought out by the public, government organizations, and other professions.

To earn an ISA Certified Arborist credential, one must be trained and knowledgeable in all aspects of arboriculture. One must pass a rigorous exam in various tree-related topics and accumulate continuing education units to maintain credential.

ISA Certified Arborists must also adhere to the Code of Ethics that strengthens the credibility and reliability of the workforce.

For more information, please visit the following link:
International Society of Arboriculture > Credentials > Types of Credentials > ISA Certified Arborist

Tree Care Industry Association

Who are they

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) serves as the national trade association for a wide range of tree care businesses, including commercial and residential tree care companies, as well as affiliated companies. The mission of TCIA is to advance tree care businesses and improve safety within the industry, while also providing consumers with relevant information to help maintain the health of their trees.

TCIA has over 2,000 member companies. It publishes a monthly magazine filled with tree and business -related articles. A free subscription to its monthly magazine can be obtained by visiting the following link: *https://tcimag.tcia.org*

Tree Seedlings, Arbor Day Celebration

Year	Common Name	Quantity	Cost	Total
2016	Sugar Maple	100		
2016	Native Mountain Ash	100		
2016	Canaan Fir	210		
2017	Concolor Fir	100		
2017	Black Cherry	150		
2017	Western Paper Birch	150		
2018	Concolor Fir	100		
2018	European Beach	106		
2018	Kousa Dogwood	24		
2019	Bristlecone Pine	52		
2019	Serviceberry	102		
2019	Rocky Mountain Maple	102		
2020	COVID-19, No Seedlings	0		
2021	Sugar Maple	80		
2021	Incense Cedar	80		
2021	Chokecherry	75		
2021	Limber Pine	100		
2022	Western Larch	55		
2022	Redoiser Dogwood	55		
2022	Bur Oak	55		
2023	Black Cherry	50		
2023	Incense Cedar	50		
2023	Bigtooth Maple	50		
Spring 2024	Oak, Bur-Gambel	50		
Spring 2024	Spruce, Blue (Colorado)	50		
Spring 2024	Sumac, Smooth	50		
Fall 2024	Canaan Fir	45	$ 3.67	$ 165.15
Fall 2024	Rocky Mountain Juniper	45	$ 3.67	$ 165.15
Fall 2024	Western Larch	45	$ 3.67	$ 165.15
Fall 2024	Sugar Maple	45	$ 3.67	$ 165.15
Fall 2024	Chokecherry	40	$ 3.67	$ 146.80
Fall 2024	Northern Catalpa	45	$ 3.67	$ 165.15
Fall 2024	Bagging	265	$ 0.10	$ 26.50
		265		$ 999.05
Spring 2025	Bristlecone Pine	55	$ 3.67	$ 201.85
Spring 2025	Syringa, Lewis	55	$ 3.67	$ 201.85
Spring 2025	Northern Catalpa	94	$ 3.67	$ 344.98
Fall 2025	Pine, Ponderosa	41	$ 3.89	$ 159.49
Fall 2025	Dogwood, Redoiser	42	$ 3.89	$ 163.38
Fall 2025	Alt: Oak, Bur-English	42	$ 3.89	$ 163.38
Fall 2025	Bagging	125	$ 0.10	$ 12.50
Spring 2026	Oceanspray			
Spring 2026	Serviceberry			
Spring 2026	Red Oak			
Spring 2026	Catalpa			
Fall 2026	Elderberry, Blue			
Fall 2026	Lilac; White, Common			
Fall 2026	Hackberry, Western			
Fall 2026	Scouler's Willow			
Spring 2027	Current, Red Flowering			
Spring 2027	Cedar, Incense			
Spring 2027	Native Mountain Ash			
Spring 2027	European Beech			