

Tree and Shrub Pruning
Georgia Practice Job Sheet - 660

Prepared for: _____

Prepared by: _____

Farm: _____ Tract Number: _____ Date: _____



Definition

The removal of all or parts of selected branches, leaders, or roots from trees and shrubs.

Purpose:

This practice is applied to support one or more of the following purposes:

- ◆ Maintain or improve plant productivity, health and vigor, and/or reduce excessive plant pest pressure.
- ◆ Develop desired plant structure, foliage or branching density, or rooting length.
- ◆ Improve the composition and vigor of understory plants.
- ◆ Maintain or improve soil quality and organic matter content.
- ◆ Reduce wildfire and/or safety hazards.
- ◆ Reduce energy use during field operations.

Commercial Timber

◆ Species to Prune

Pruning may be practiced on nearly all species. Normally, pruning is only recommended for high-value species.

◆ Trees to Prune

Pruning should be performed only on the better dominant and codominant trees in the stand. Any tree which is malformed, damaged or diseased should be removed during an intermediate cutting.

◆ Size of Trees to Prune and Timing

Begin when trees reach 3 inches DBH. Pruning should be done during the dormant season, generally late October through March. Black walnut can fork and become excessively crooked, so it may be necessary to begin at the age of 2 to 3 years on this species.

◆ Height to Prune

For the purpose of producing a clear, knot-free product, prune every 4-6 years to eventually attain a clear bole height of 18 feet. Each pruning should never be more than two-thirds of the total tree height.

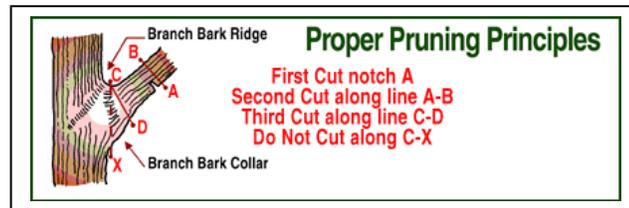
Pruning Method

The following pruning methods may be used:

Pruning Method	Time	Pruning DBH (in.)	Approx. Tree Ht. (ft.)	Pruning Height (ft.)
Three Step	1 st	3-4	15-20	7-10
	2 nd	5-6	25-30	12-15
	3 rd	6-8	35-40	17-20
Two Step	1 st	3-5	15-25	7-12
	2 nd	5-8	25-40	12-20
One Step	1 st	5-8	25-40	12-20

Pruning Techniques

- ❑ Use a pruning saw, never an ax.
- ❑ Use the "pull-stroke" method instead of the conventional "push-and-pull" method.
- ❑ Dead branches may be pruned during any season. Green branches should be pruned during winter when trees are dormant and the disease and insect hazard is lower. Do not prune during the growing season.
- ❑ Do not cut flush with the tree trunk. First, locate the branch bark ridge and make pruning cuts on the outside of the branch collar. Do not leave branch stubs, living or dead. See sketch below.



- ❑ Cut small branches from the top. Very large branches may need an undercut prior to overcut to prevent tearing of bark or splitting of limbs.
- ❑ For best results, prune only half the height of the tree. Never prune more than two-thirds of the total height.
- ❑ When possible stand up wind to avoid possible eye injury from sawdust.
- ❑ When using a series of extension lengths on saws, use a sufficient number to stand clear of falling limbs.

Ornamental Species and Pruning for Recreation, Landscaping, and Aesthetics

- ◆ Trees on recreational areas and near buildings may need pruning regardless of their size. Trees which have either recreational or aesthetic value may be pruned in the same manner as those pruned for commercial wood products. The height to prune is generally the height necessary to allow pedestrian passage, vehicular traffic, and save visibility.
- ◆ Deciduous trees, except elms, birch, dogwood, and maples may be pruned at any time. Spring pruning will allow for faster healing of the wound.
- ◆ Elms, birch, dogwood and maples should be pruned after full leaf development. Pruning in late winter or early spring causes profuse bleeding.
- ◆ Pruning of evergreens can be done at any time.

Christmas Trees

- ◆ Very few trees grow naturally into good Christmas tree form. To develop the desired taper, the tree must be sheared and pruned. Pruning is the removal of undesirable wood or branches older than one year, such as diseased, dead, or damaged wood or forks. Shearing is cutting back the current year's growth of the terminal and lateral branches. Christmas trees should be pruned the first year after planting to remove forked tops. The lower limbs up to 6 inches may be removed in the later pruning (s) to provide a handle for the tree.
- ◆ Shearing should begin the second or third year, depending on the species. Trees should be sheared once or twice each year according to the species. Acceptable standards for taper range from 40 to 90 percent.

Certification Job Sheet:

Prepared by: _____

Title: _____ Date: _____

Approved by: _____

Title: _____ Date: _____

Installation/Check Out:

Was landowner objective met using pruning technique _____ (Yes or No)?

What is the average DBH _____ and the average height _____ of pruned trees in Silvopasture operation?

Number of trees/shrubs per acre to be treated _____.

Were mitigation measures (e.g., slash and debris disposal) removed to minimize wildfire hazard and attraction of pests, to maintain soil quality, and to minimize impacts on desirable vegetation and wildlife _____ (Yes or No)?

Was pruning implement during the correct time of year to prevent disease, insect's infestation, and negative wildlife impacts _____?

Select the pruning treatment method(s) _____ and pruning technique _____ applied to implement tree and shrub pruning.

This practice was completed and meets NRCS standards and specifications.

Certification by: _____

Date: _____

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