

Landowner _____



WHAT IS TREE/SHRUB PRUNING?

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

PURPOSE

- Maintain or improve tree/shrub productivity, health and vigor, and/or reduce excessive pest pressure.
- Develop desired tree 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.

WHERE THE PRACTICE APPLIES

Tree/shrub pruning applies on any area with trees and/or shrubs.

WHERE TO GET HELP

For assistance and additional information on planning tree/shrub pruning, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service or your local Conservation District office.

APPLYING THE PRACTICE

Equipment

Proper tools are essential for satisfactory pruning. The choice of which depends largely on the size of branches to be pruned and the amount of pruning to be done.

The most commonly used tools for pruning trees include hand pruners, lopping shears, pruning saws, chain saws and pole pruners. An ax should never be used for pruning purposes.

Tools should be clean and sanitized, as well as sharp. Although sanitizing tools may be inconvenient and seldom practiced, doing so may prevent the spread of disease from infected to healthy trees on contaminated tools. Tools become contaminated when they come into contact with fungi, bacteria, viruses and other microorganism that cause disease in trees.

Sanitizing should be practiced as follows: before each branch is cut, sanitize pruning tools by immersing in a solution of 70% denatured alcohol, or with liquid household bleach diluted 1:9 with water (1 part bleach, 9 parts water).

Method/Technique

When deciding how much to prune a tree, as little as possible is often the best. All prunes place stress on a tree and increase its vulnerability to disease and insects. On no account, prune more than 25% of the crown. After pruning, the ratio of living crown to total tree height should be at least two-thirds (e.g., a 15 ft. tree should have living branches on at least the upper 10 ft.). Pruning more can risk fatally damaging a tree.

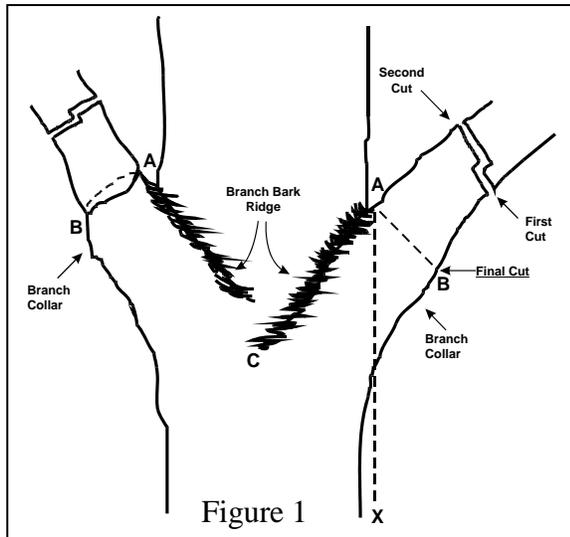
The principle behind pruning small twigs is to always cut back to a bud which is directed outward and will produce new growth. Proper pruning cuts on small branches are made at a node, the point at which one branch or twig attaches to another. In the spring of the year growth begins at buds, and twigs grow until a new node is formed.

Prune large branches according to the following steps (Figure 1 - below):

1. Stub the branch to be pruned by making the first cut on the underside of the branch about 18 inches from the trunk. Undercut one-third to one-half way through the branch. Make the second cut an inch further out on the

branch; cut until the branch breaks free, leaving a stub.

2. Locate the branch bark ridge.
3. Find **A** (outside edge of branch bark ridge).
4. Find **B** (swelling where branch meets branch collar).
5. Make the final cut on line **AB**.



Timing

In general, the best time to prune most trees and shrubs is during late winter or early spring after the coldest part of the winter has passed (February, March and April), before they begin to leaf out.

Some trees, however, tend to “bleed” or exude large quantities of sap when pruned in late winter or early spring. While oozing sap is not harmful to the tree and will cease when the tree leafs out, it can make a sticky, dirty mess. January and July are the best months to prune trees known as “bleeders”, which include: willow, maple, elm, birch, dogwood, walnut, and mulberry. During January and July, trees have the lowest sap flow.

MAINTAINING THE PRACTICE

Periodically inspect tree condition and conduct additional pruning if needed.

Regular re-inspection and re-pruning, following storm events, is necessary to maintain the long-term vigor of established trees.

Control locally invasive and noxious plants that may establish due to increased light.

Tree/Shrub Establishment – Job Sheet

Landowner _____ Acres _____ Field number _____

County _____ Legal Description _____

Purpose (check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain or improve tree productivity or health and vigor	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain or improve soil quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop desirable tree structure, foliage or branching	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce wildfire and/or safety hazards
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve composition and vigor of understory plants	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce energy use during field operations

Tree Species to be Pruned	
Method/Technique to Use	
Timing	
Min/Max of branch or foliage to cut/remove	
Type of Equipment to Use	
Tool Sanitation Method	
Trees/Ac to be treated	

Additional Specifications and Notes:

Client Signature, as needed _____ **Date** _____

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