



# Urban Forestry Fact Sheet

## Proper Pruning

**Why prune properly?** Any time you are pruning a tree, the tree will inevitably go under stress. By pruning properly, benefits of pruning may be maximized while costs may be minimized.

### When is the best time to prune?

To avoid internal decay, pruning should be performed on branches that are less than two inches in diameter. Pruning larger branches should be saved only when the cuts are justified for functional purposes (Proximity to powerlines, dead branches that pose a risk to property, etc.) Prunings should be done during late winter and into early spring. Warmer weather allows for the trees to make woundwood earlier.

### Types of pruning cuts

#### Thinning Cuts

This cut is done directly above the branch collar, this cut reduces the possibility of decaying wood following a pruning.



#### Reduction Cuts

This cut is usually performed on younger trees where the leading branch tends toward a poor location. This cut is made  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " above a lateral branch with an angle between the direction of the lateral and the perpendicular of the leading bud. The diameter of the new leader must be at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  that of the leader.



#### Heading Cuts

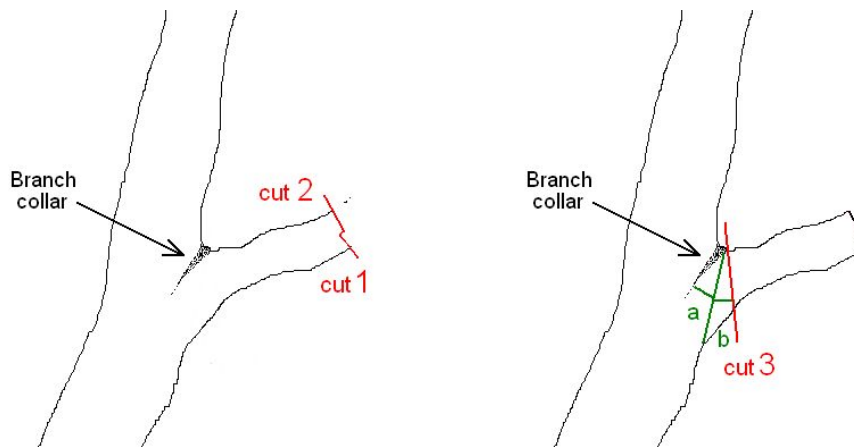
This cut is often made to increase canopy on fruiting trees. The cut is made  $\frac{1}{4}$ " above a bud and at a  $45^\circ$  angle. This causes the buds below the cut to turn into new branches.



## Proper Pruning continued:

### Large Branch removal

For removing particular large branches, a three step pruning is usually implemented to prevent tearing the branch collar. Starting far from 12 to 15 inches and cut halfway through the branch. Next, go three inches above the first cut, then proceed to make a second cut halfway through the branch on the opposite side. Remove the branch so only a stub is left. Make the final cut normally along the branch collar.



#### Additional Information

- Recent research has shown that wound dressings and paint are more likely to inhibit growth
- Removing less than 10% of foliage per season is generally safe for all trees. In extreme cases, growing trees may tolerate up to 25% of foliage and mature trees may tolerate up to 20%
- For trees that are not prone to pests or diseases, pruning may prove beneficial during the summer months as well.

### ***What if I don't feel comfortable performing this myself?***

The SWCD can help by:

- Having maintenance done by an MN certified tree inspector
- Connecting you to other resources and professionals nearby
- Assessing and inventorying your trees needs to prepare for the future.
- Performing plantings and other tree services at cost!

***Give us a call today to get started! 218-384-3891***

