

Pruning Basics

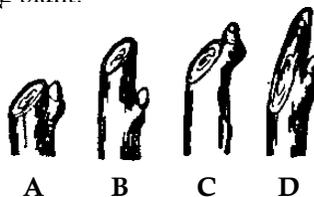
Proper pruning is most essential to insure quick starting and vigorous growth, correct shape, long life and big crops of fruits and flowers. Proper pruning of both tops and roots usually determines success or failure.

Pruning the roots when planting is just as necessary as pruning the tops. The plant is nourished by little feeder roots which start from the ends of the old roots. These little feeder roots will not develop properly unless the ends of the roots are pruned.

The picture below shows how to make a correct diagonal cut and how close to the bud one should prune. It is usually desirable to cut above a bud facing the outside of the plant to produce an open spreading plant.

Branches more than 1 inch diameter should be sawed off.

A—Just Right
B—Too far from bud
C—Too close to bud
D—Too sloping cut



FRUIT TREES

We recommend the newer “modified central leader” method. Many successful orchardists find that it combines the best points of the old fashioned “central leader” and the “open center” plans.

With the “modified central leader” method, the best available central leader is left only a few inches longer when the tree is planted. As the tree develops, the head is trained low-branched, open and almost round, but the modified central leader is retained.

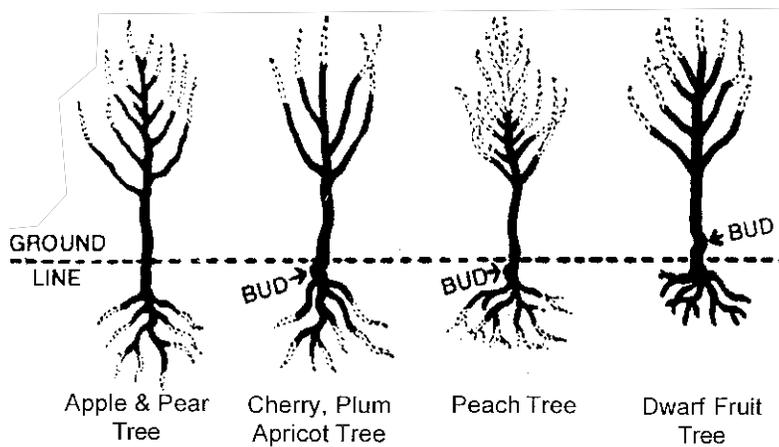
Apple and Pear trees are usually pruned the same way. As pear trees grow upright, branches must be thinned out to avoid too dense tops.

Cherry, Plum, and Apricot trees are usually pruned about the same. Hardy varieties require more thinning to retain the open top.

Peach trees require much more severe cutting back when planting.

Whips of all kinds should be cut off just above a bud 24 to 30 inches above the ground.

Fruit trees trained with very low branched heads withstand winds and are much easier to spray, prune, and pick.



SHADE TREES

Shade trees are usually developed with a strong central leader. Side branches should be pruned when planting to eliminate weak crotches and develop a strong shapely framework. Roots should also be pruned to insure proper development of feeder roots. After the first year, prune just enough to obtain the right shape and growth.

Chinese Elm, Lombardy Poplar, and trees used for screens or windbreaks should branch from the ground up. Never cut off the lower branches until the tree is older and needs thinning out.



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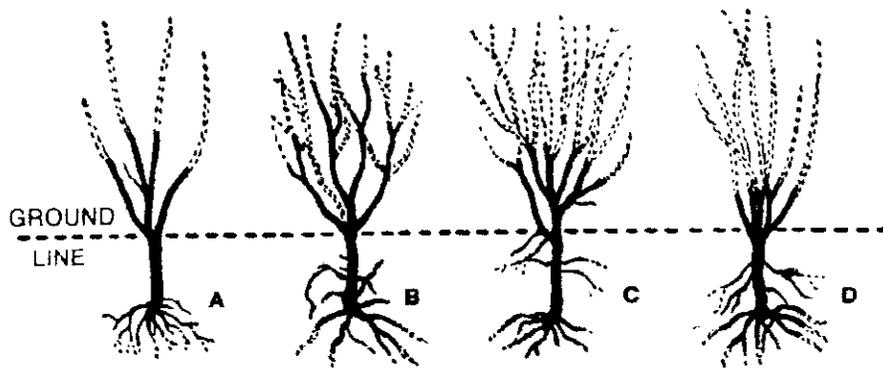
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SHRUBS

Many shrubs are very dormant and must be severely pruned when planted to insure fast, vigorous growth and well shaped plants. Ends of roots should be slipped to stimulate growth of new feeder roots. These drawings show four methods of properly pruning different types.

- A. This method is usually used on varieties with fewer but heavier branches—like Lilac, Snowball, Mock Orange, Viburnum, etc.
- B. If you prefer to retain height, you may thin by cutting off about half the branches near the crown as pictured in “B”. This is not feasible for the many-branched shrubs shown in “D”.
- C. For best results, most varieties of shrubs should be cut off as pictured in “C”.
- D. Some multibranched varieties and others that produce blooms on new growth, should be cut off about 4 inches above the ground after planting. Included here are Crepe Myrtle, Hydrangea AG, Spirea, Potentilla, Hypericum, Dwarf Deutzia, and Buddleia. Don’t be alarmed if tip branches of these are dead when received as severe freezes sometimes kill them. Cut them off and the live crown will produce new branches and bloom.

After the first year, these shrubs should be pruned shortly after blooming to avoid destroying the bloom.



ROSES

Roses will not grow well unless branches are severely pruned. Prune roots and branches even more severely than pruned when they are received from the nursery when they are potted or planted. After the first year, additional pruning is required.

Hybrid Tea roses bloom on new branches each year. Old branches do not bloom and must be pruned in early Spring to 10 to 15 inches in height. If top branches winter kill, the root often throws up heavy branches that either do not bloom or produce small single flowers. Any branches sprouting below the bud must be cut off close to the root.

Floribundas need not be severely pruned after the first year, except to remove dead branches or to control the size of the bush.

Climbing roses seldom bloom the first year. After the first year, trim off dead or damaged branches, but do not prune short like hybrid tea roses.

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