

How to Prune Young Trees

Pruning is usually needed within the first five years of planting to help the tree establish proper form and strength. The pruning goal is to establish a strong trunk with sturdy, well-spaced branches. The best time to prune is in the fall or winter when the leaves are off the tree.



You will need sharp pruning shears for small trees and a tree saw for large limbs. Note: Be aware of the natural shape of the tree, and keep that in mind in Step 3.

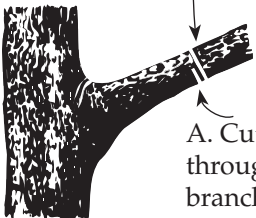
1. Sterilize your cutting tools to prevent disease. Pruning paint is necessary for oaks.
2. Start by removing dead, dying and diseased branches. (Cutting diagram below.)
3. Look at the trunk and identify one main (dominant) trunk. You are trying to establish a single trunk that reaches six to eight feet high before it forks. Trees with trunks that fork lower than this are generally weaker and more prone to limb failure. Prune with this in mind.
4. Prune branches that are crossing or rubbing against other branches.
5. Eliminate branches that create narrow v-shaped branch angles.

More detailed information is available on the Web:
www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs and www.treesaregood.com

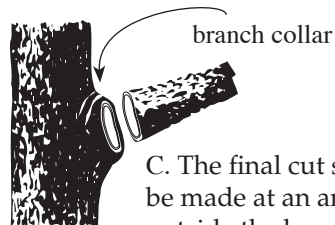
CAUTION: Newly planted trees do not need to be pruned immediately. Trees need time to establish a root system. Be sure to leave at least 75 percent of the tree intact. It is damaging to your tree to prune too much.

Technique for Cutting Large Branches

B. Make downward cut through branch.



A. Cut part way through the branch.



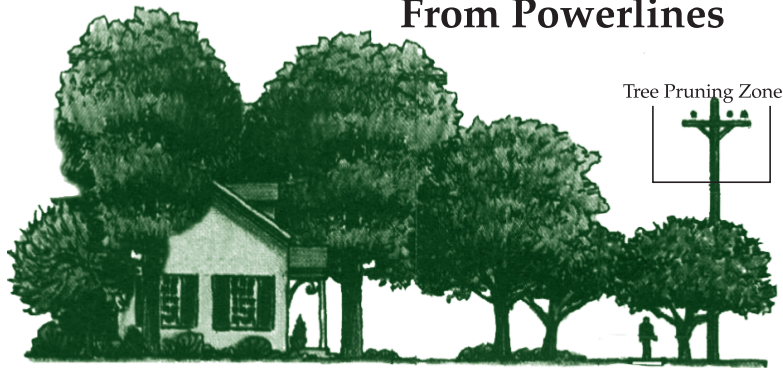
C. The final cut should be made at an angle just outside the branch collar.

The branch collar is the bulge formed at the base of the branch. It should be left intact when pruning all branches, large and small.



Austin's Community-Owned Electric Utility

Plant Tall Trees Away From Powerlines



Tall Trees

(40 ft. or higher)
Plant 50 ft. from the pole.
Examples:
Oak
Elm
Sycamore

Medium Trees

(40 ft. or lower)
Plant 20-50 ft. from the pole.
Examples:
Afghan Pine
Chinese Pistache
Bradford Pear

Small Trees

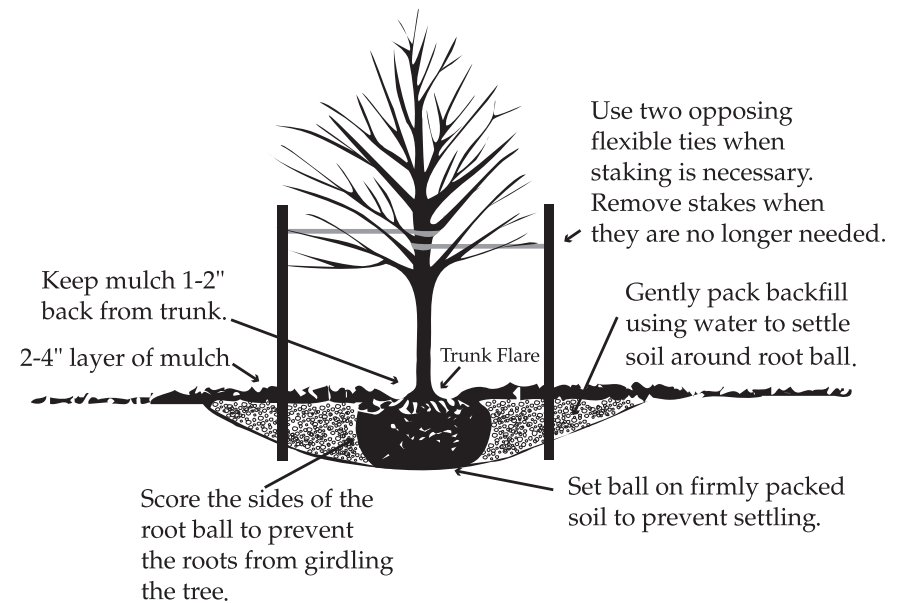
(25 ft. or lower)
Plant within 20 ft. of the pole.
Examples:
Mexican Plum
Texas Redbud
Yaupon Holly

The Right Tree for the Right Place

The key to enjoying the benefits of trees for shading and reduced energy costs is to select the right tree and plant it in the right place.

Make sure the tree will have adequate room to grow. The tree must be clear of hazards such as power lines, roofs and gutters and underground electric and water lines.

Deciduous trees planted on the south and southwest sides of your home help save energy by shading your home in the hot summer while allowing the sun to warm your home in winter. If you don't have room to plant a large tree, you can plant vines and shrubbery near your wall to help insulate your home from the summer heat. Planting small trees to shade your air conditioner allows it to operate more efficiently.



How to Plant a Tree

The months of October through February are optimal for planting trees. Weather is cool and allows tree roots to become established before the summer heat sets in. Be sure to determine where underground utilities are located before you dig. Follow these simple planting steps:

- 1. Dig a wide enough hole.** The hole needs to be at least 2-3 times the width of the root ball to give new roots room to expand.
- 2. Plant the tree at the proper depth.** The hole should be as deep as the root ball and no deeper. The place on the tree where the trunk flares into the roots should be partially visible when the tree is planted.
- 3. Keep it natural.** Once you have the tree in the hole, straighten it, and backfill with the same soil that you dug from the hole. Avoid adding any extra fertilizer or other materials at this time because it can impair how quickly the tree adapts to its surroundings.
- 4. Water and mulch.** Water your new tree thoroughly to settle the soil. Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around the area where you planted the tree. Make sure to leave at least a 2- to 3-inch space of bare ground between the mulch and the trunk of the tree to prevent decay. Water the tree weekly for the first two years if there is not sufficient rainfall.