

PRUNING MATURE TREES

Pruning can be done for many reasons. You may prune because you need to: remove dead branches, remove crowded limbs, eliminate hazards, increase light and air movement to the interior of a tree, free the inside of a tree's crown, or open a space for plantings beneath a tree. However it is important to note that removing too much foliage through pruning can reduce the tree's growth and stored energy reserves. The tree's crown has dense leaves which manufacture the sugar used as energy for the future growth and development of the tree itself. Heavy pruning can cause significant stress and have a serious health risk for a tree.

Therefore it is most important to have a tree professional, such as a certified arborist, supervise any pruning or thinning of branches. Safety and aesthetics as well as the future health of a tree should be the prime considerations before undertaking a pruning program.

When to Prune

This is best done in early spring before the normal spring growth. Maples and birches may tend to "bleed" when this is done. This may look messy, but this will not hurt the tree. Check with your local arborist about tree diseases in your area. A few tree diseases may be spread if spores can gain access to your tree during pruning. The arborist can tell you if this is a possibility in your area. Doing a heavy pruning after spring growth is not good for your tree's health. This can stress your tree, which has just put a lot of energy into producing new leaves and shoots.

Wound Dressings

These were previously believed to protect a tree and accelerate wound closure. Most professionals recommend against these now, unless simply used for cosmetic purposes. Once again, check with a professional about your own situation.

Pruning Techniques



www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/approaches.htm

www.tlcfortrees.info/pruning_of_mature_trees

www.urbantree.org/pruning_mature_trees.asp

Please also note our link on “Why Topping Hurts Trees” and “Pruning Young Trees”