How to Prune a Tree

How To's · https://sargentsgardens.com/docs/tree-pruning-guide/

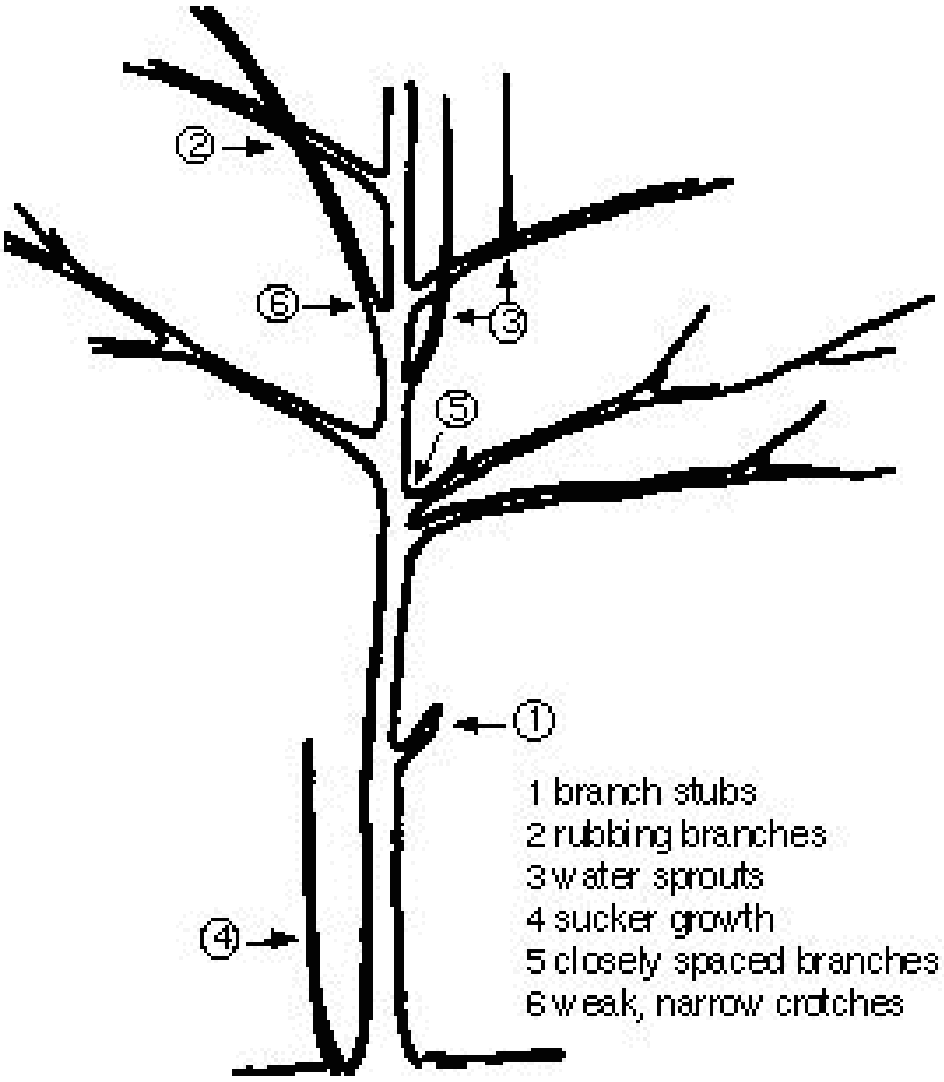
Correct pruning is critical to the long-term health and appearance of any tree or shrub. Below you will find guidelines to help you be successful. Young trees and mature trees need to be pruned differently. For the best time to prune, reference our seasonal maintenance series to see which trees should be pruned in which season.

Young tree pruning

Good pruning habits from an early age is the best preventative maintenance for young trees. At planting, remove only dead or diseased branches. Begin more aggressive pruning during the first dormant season after planting.

- Prune to shape young trees, but don't cut back the leader.
- Remove crossing branches and branches that grow back towards the center of the tree.
- As young trees grow, remove lower branches gradually to raise the crown, and remove branches that are too closely spaced on the trunk. The crown should be approximately 2/3 of the tree.
- Remove multiple leaders on evergreens and other trees where a single leader is desirable.

Mature tree pruning



There are many things to consider when pruning a mature tree. This diagram should give you an idea of what to look for. Continue to remove any dead or diseased branches. Being careful to not remove too much growth, prune to manage crown shape and height. Remove branches that grow inward towards the trunk or crowd out other, healthier branches. To shorten a small branch, locate a bud and prune about ¼” above it. Be sure to choose a bud that faces outwards to promote outward growth.

To prune a larger branch, 3 cuts may be required to not damage the bark. Use the diagram below as a guide.

- Make the first cut on the underside of the branch roughly 18” from the trunk about halfway through the branch.
- Make the second cut about 1 inch further out and cut until the branch breaks free.

- Make the last cut against the trunk making sure to follow the natural collar swelling. This will allow the cut to heal more quickly.

