

Winter Pruning

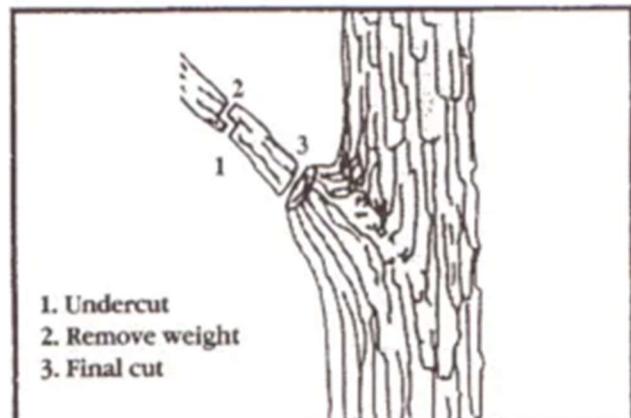
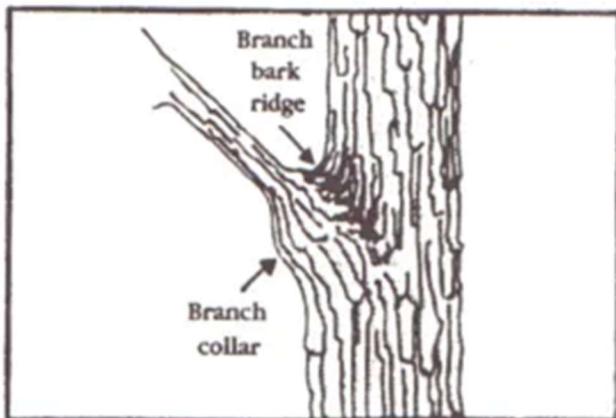
Looking for an outdoor project? Consider getting a head start on this year's yard work by pruning your trees. Winter is considered the best time of the year to prune, while deciduous trees are dormant. Properly pruning your trees in the winter will improve their structure and strength capabilities making them less susceptible to a late spring snowstorm.

Benefits of winter pruning include:

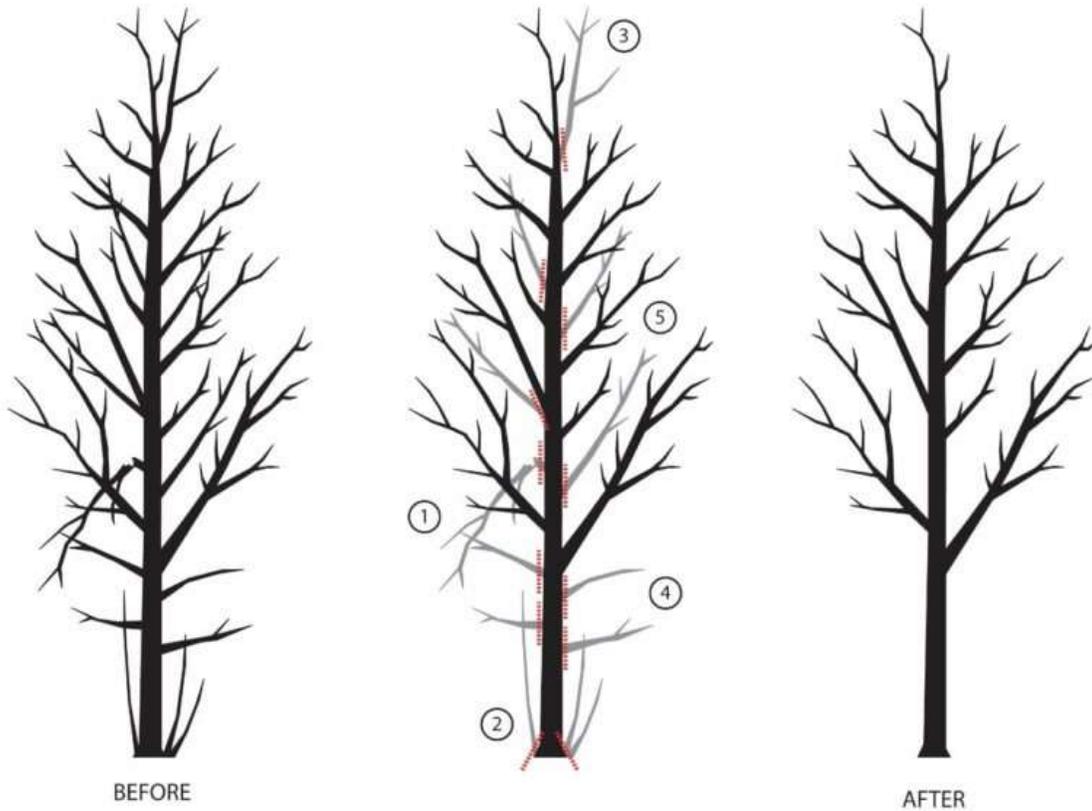
1. Unwanted branches are removed thus not drawing energy away from the rest of the tree.
2. Low temperatures prevent the spread of disease.
3. Winter pruning gives the tree an entire growing season to heal pruning wounds.

Large tree pruning should only be done by Certified Arborists; however, small trees can be pruned with a few essential tools and some knowledge of tree pruning. Necessary tools include **1. A hand pruner**, **2. A hand saw**, and **3. A step ladder**.

Before pruning can begin, a basic understanding of how to make a pruning cut is necessary to prevent needless damage to the tree and encourage proper wound closure. Pruning cuts should be made just outside the *branch bark ridge* and *branch collar*. When pruning larger branches, the **3-cut method** should be used to prevent the weight of the limb from tearing bark off the tree.

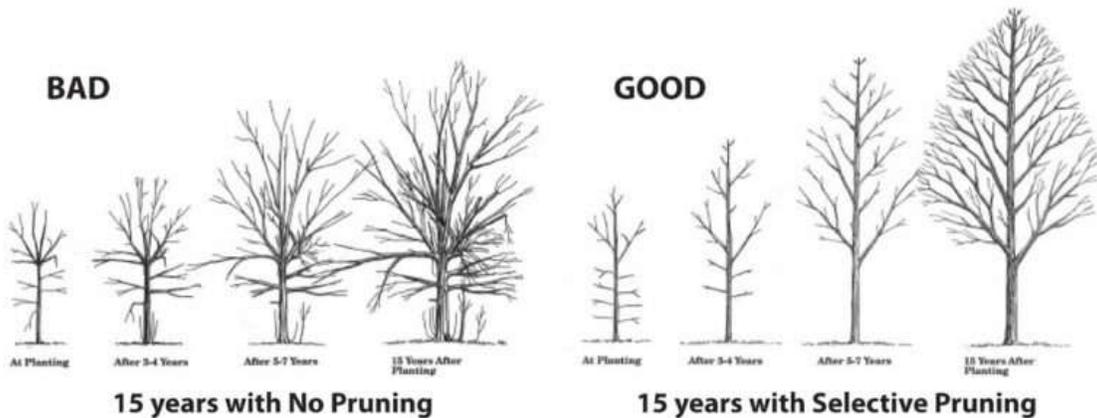


Now that you have the basics, pruning should begin by first making a visual inspection of the tree. All *dead limbs*, *water sprouts*, and *suckers* should be removed first. Next, identify the *best leader* and remove competing leaders. Finally, look for *defective branches*, such as *rubbing or crossing branches* and *narrow angled branches*.



PRUNING STEPS - WORK THROUGH EACH TREE IN THIS ORDER

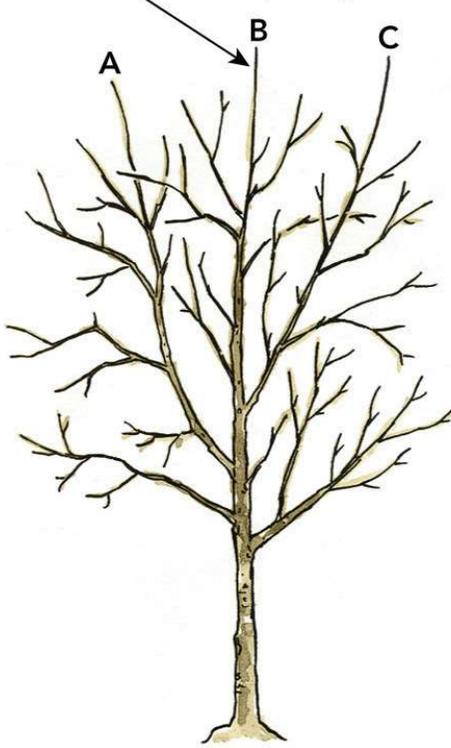
- #1: Remove any broken or damaged branches at branch collar
- #2: Remove root suckers or epicormic growth from trunk
- #3: Select a single leader; remove or reduce co-dominant branches
- #4: Remove lowest temporary branches to lift the canopy for clearance and visibility
- #5: Identify permanent and remove temporary branches



15 years with No Pruning

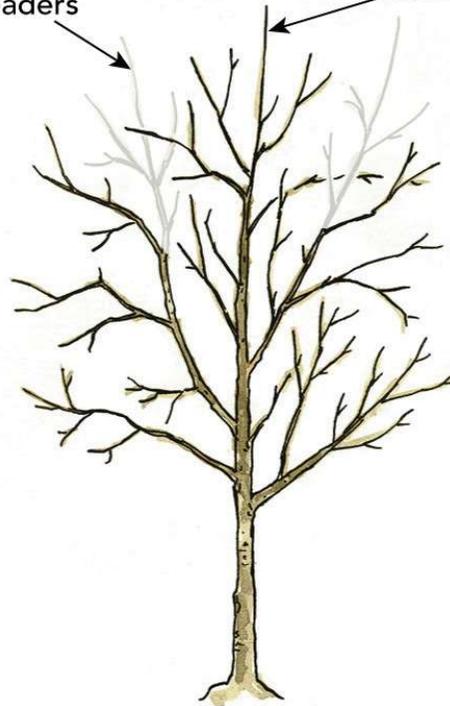
15 years with Selective Pruning

A, B, and C are competing leaders



TREE WITH MULTI-LEADERS

Remove competing leaders
New dominant leader



TREE WITH NEW DOMINANT LEADER

If necessary, now you can move on to **thinning**. Thinning is the selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement through the canopy. Spacing lateral branches **8-12 inches apart** in a young tree is a good rule of thumb.

For questions regarding your tree pruning, please contact **Cheyenne Urban Forestry** at (307) 637-6428 or visit our websites

<https://rootedincheyenne.com/winter-pruning/> and www.cheyennetrees.com.