

Quick and Dirty Pruning – The Basics



Created by the Grand Junction District

For more information contact us

at 970-248-7325

Caution



- The following pruning information and instructions are designed for small to medium sized pruning jobs
- If the work is off the ground, if a chainsaw is needed, or for tree removal: the work should be done by a ISA Certified Arborist *with insurance*
 - International Society of Arboriculture,
www.isa-arbor.com

Pruning Tools



Do not leave the ground - leave that to the professionals

Pruning Tools



Bypass pruners are superior to anvil pruners

Honor the Branch Collar



The collar is formed by overlapping branch and trunk tissue which makes the branch union very strong. It connects a branch to its parent branch or to the trunk.

Honor the Branch Bark Ridge



Bark that has been pushed up into a ridge as the branch and trunk grow. It indicates a strong branch attachment. It is not visible on all tree species.

Using Hand Pruners

branch diameter is less than 1 inch

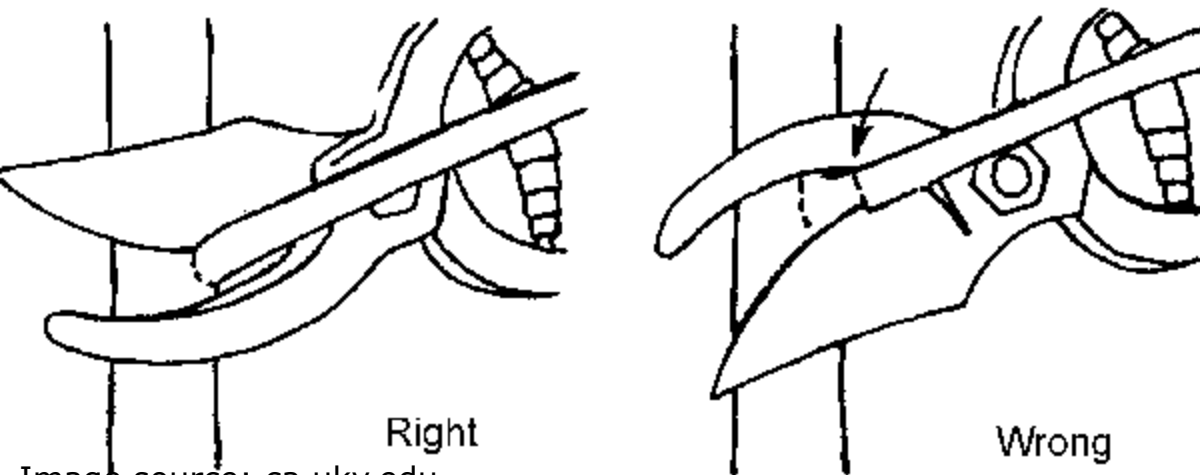
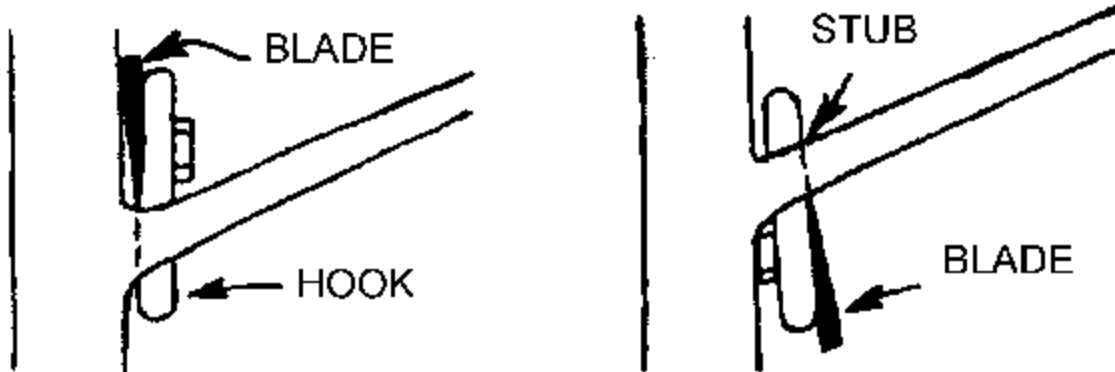
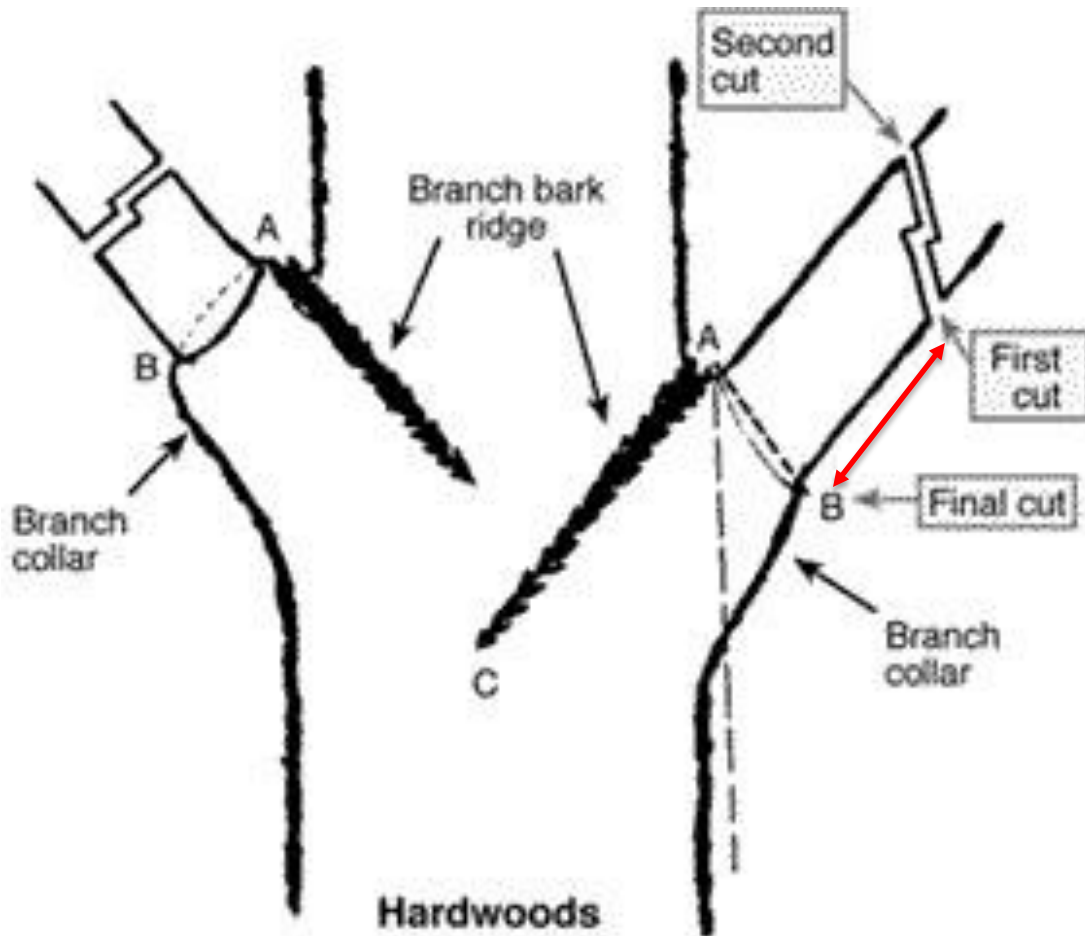


Image source: newleaftreecare.net

Image source: ca.uky.edu

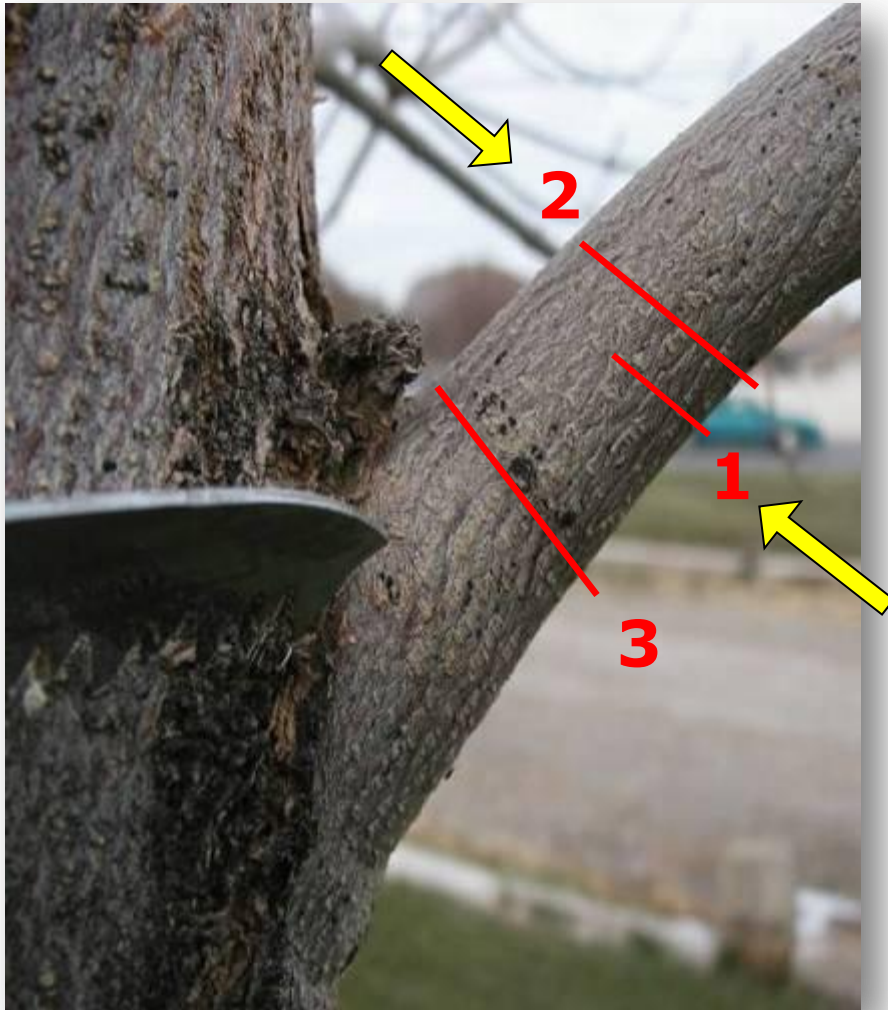
Do not cut into the branch collar or bark ridge. No flush cut.
Place pruning blade against stem of branch for proper cut.

Three Step Process – branch diameter is greater than one inch



- Three Step Process prevents the weight of the branch from tearing any bark off the trunk
- First Cut – $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ through underside of branch
- Second Cut – Above first cut and all the way through branch. This cut will leave a stub.
- Third Cut – Remove remaining stub. Do not cut into the branch collar or branch bark ridge. Double-sided arrow indicates length of stub

Three Step Pruning Process



1. Cut UP 2. Cut DOWN 3. Cut OFF (remove stub)

Not always a defined collar, look for swell or branch bark ridge

Three Step Pruning Process



1. Cut UP 2. Cut DOWN 3. Cut OFF (remove stub)

Three Step Pruning Process



1. Cut UP 2. Cut DOWN 3. Cut OFF (remove stub)

Do not violate the three step process for Large Branches



- If not followed, the weight of the branch will tear the bark off the tree resulting in a larger wound
- The first step in the three step process is the undercut and it will prevent this from occurring

Callus Wood



Circular callus wood indicates good wound **closure**



Oval callus wood indicates the cut was made too close to the trunk = flush cut

What Not To Do

Flush Cutting



- Inside the collar is a unique barrier: Branch Protection Zone
- This zone has chemical and physical properties that slow or stop the spread of decay into the trunk
- Flush cutting removes this protection zone and allows decay inside the tree

Flush Cutting

-Do not cut into the collar



Trees React to Injury



Trees react poorly to injuries such as flush cuts or torn branches

Pruning Stubs



Branch stubs are a great place for insects and diseases to attack and damage the tree

Watersprouts



This tree reacted to being topped by producing water sprouts

Do Not Top Trees



Image source: Ed Gilman

Topping trees promotes bad branch structure and allows decay into the wounds

Safety First



Never, ever use a branch. He needs to hire a professional

Favorite Websites

Special Thanks to Vince Urbina for his pictures and information.

- **Dr. Ed Gillman**
 - <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/>
- **OSU Landscape Plants**
 - <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/>
- **Tree Browser from Utah State University – Extension Forestry**
 - <http://treebrowser.org>
- **Colorado State Extention**
 - www.ext.colostate.edu/
- **Colorado Tree Coalition**
 - www.coloradotrees.org