

When to Prune

- Prune your trees in late fall to early spring, before the leaves grow.
- Wait to prune the tree until at least one year after planting.

Common Mistakes

- Using dull tools makes rough cuts
- Cutting too much at once
- Topping the tree:
 - Cutting off too much from the top of a tree can hurt it and may eventually cause the tree to die.

Quick Facts

- Pruning a young tree saves money. You can remove small branches yourself, compared to pruning larger branches that require an arborist.
- Pruning is preventive maintenance for both insect and disease damage.
- Correctly pruning a tree when it's young helps it develop a strong, well-balanced crown.

City Trees

Free and low-cost trees for
Minneapolis residents
and businesses



minneapolis.gov/city-trees

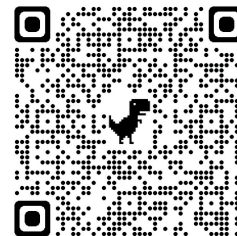
For more information, scan the QR code
or visit these websites:

Tree Owner's Manual



treeownersmanual.info

University of
Minnesota Extension



[extension.umn.edu/
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guides/pruning-
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Tree Pruning Guide

How to prune young trees



Safety

Pruning can be dangerous—protect yourself.

- Never prune branches within 10 feet of power lines. Contact your local utility company instead.
- Avoid using ladders.
 - If you can't prune with both feet on the ground, hire a certified arborist.
- If pruning requires power equipment, hire a certified arborist.

Pruning Tools

Using the right tools makes pruning easier and helps you do a good job. Keep tools sharp and in good condition.

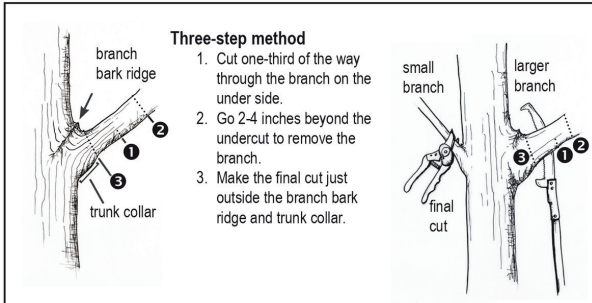
You'll need:



Four Easy Steps

1. Step back and look at the whole tree. Check for:
 - Dead or broken branches
 - Branches that cross or rub each other
 - Suckers (thin shoots near the base)
2. Start with the 3 Ds:
 - Dead
 - Diseased
 - Damaged
3. Cut correctly
 - Cut just outside the branch collar
 - Don't leave a stub
 - Don't cut too close—this harms the tree
4. Don't overdo it
 - Never remove more than 25% of the tree's branches in one year
 - Keep the tree's natural shape

Where to Cut



Pruning Goals

- A. Keep branches that are well-attached to the trunk. These are less likely to break off in the wind or heavy snow.
- B. Have one central leader. Choose one leader to keep and prune off others.
- C. Allow good spacing between branches equally around the tree.
- D. Have enough space between the ground and first branch. As the crown gets taller, the branches stay at the same height. Remove low branches over time.
- E. The crown of the tree should be at least 60% of the total tree height.

