

## **Tree Trimming Tips and Tricks**

### **Start with Professionals**

Mistakes can be costly for you and your tree.



Professionals who know about trees can help you get started with the right tree in the right place.

### **What kind of tree do you want?**

Big, small, flowering, fruit, shade, etc.

### **What kind of planting site do you have?**

Sunny, shady, wet, dry, sandy, acid, alkaline, etc.

Professionals will help you choose the type of tree you want that will grow best on your planting site.

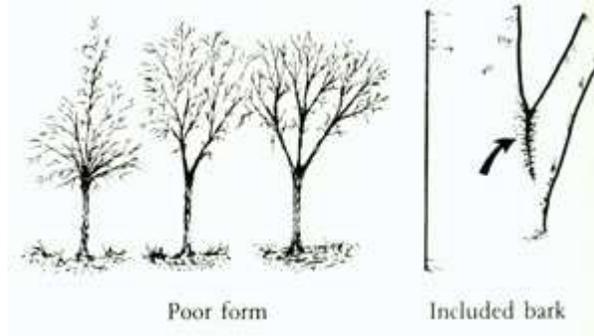
Start planting young trees near older trees that must be removed soon for safety reasons. Then, when the older tree is removed, the landscape will not be disrupted.

### **PLAN BEFORE YOU PLANT**

Choose the right tree for the right place.



Do not buy trees that have : bark squeezed between two stems or between branch and trunk (above), wounds, wrapped trunks (that hide wounds), several branches growing from the same position on the trunk, trees with circling roots in containers.



**PROVIDE SPACE**

Avoid Mutilation later



As large-maturing trees (above) grow in crowded spaces, tops are mutilated and roots are cut to make the tree fit the space. The person who planted the tree should be punished, not the tree.

**Do not plant trees under power lines, or plant only compact-form varieties.**

Plant trees far enough away from buildings so that the mature crown will not touch the building. Give trees at least 8 feet (2.5 meters) between street and sidewalk.

**Crowded trees crack sidewalks!**

**PLANT PROPERLY**

Too deep, or too wet kills.



When trees are planted too deep the roots may decline or they may grow upward and ruin lawns and crack sidewalks. It is better to plant where water must be added rather than drained. On wet or clay sites, plant on a mound.

- Plant at the depth the tree grew in the nursery.
- Prepare a large planting site, not just a small hole.
- Loosen the soil deep and far beyond the drip line.
- Do not add peat moss unless soil structure is poor.
- Cut wires if tree is in a wire basket and remove all non-biodegradable material.
- Remove only dead and injured branches and roots.
- Mulch with a thin layer of composted material
- Do not fertilize until the next growing season.
- Keep annuals and grass away from the new tree.
- Tree wrap is cosmetic only.

### **PRUNE CORRECTLY**

Too close or too long is always wrong.



*Photo courtesy of Dr. James Feucht*

Pruning cuts that leave large stubs or remove the swollen collar at the branch base start over 12 serious tree problems, such as cankers (above). When correct cuts are made, a ring or "doughnut" of living tissue will grow completely about the margin of the cut after one growing season.



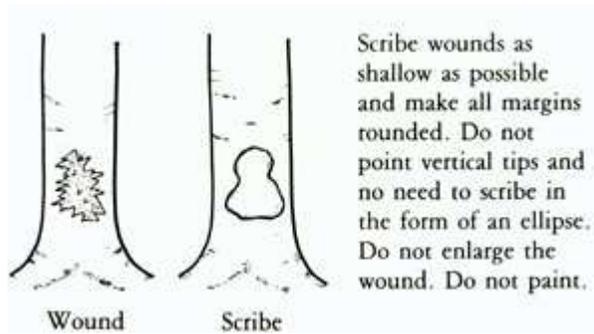
**PREVENT WOUNDS**

Wounds made by wire in hose, lawnmowers, and string trimmers can kill trees.



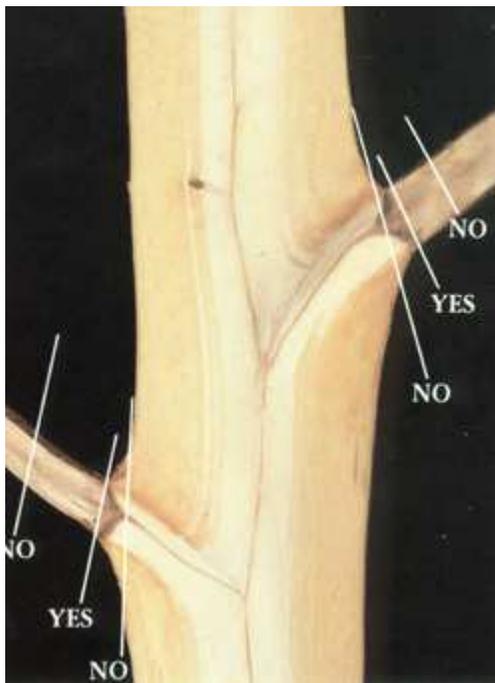
If bracing is needed, use broad, belt-like strapping that will not cut into the bark (see photo, plant properly). The tree should be able to sway slightly. Remove bracing after the tree is firm in the soil, one or two years at the most.

**DO NOT USE WIRE IN A HOSE**



### PROTECTION MEANS BOUNDARIES

Boundaries form after wounding and death of branches. Boundaries resist the spread of fungi. Boundaries also defend the liquid transport, storage and support systems of the tree.



When pruning living or dead branches, do not remove the collar at the branch base because that is where the branch protection boundary forms.

### **Dead branch removal is a health treatment.**

Dead wood is food for the rot fungi. Fungi may grow through the protection boundary when food - dead branches- is plentiful.

**Do not break boundaries.**

Do not clean cavities deep into sound wood. Do not insert pipes to drain water from cavities.

**Prevent soil compaction.**

In parks and recreation areas, consider planting trees in clusters. People will not walk over the roots and this will reduce soil compaction problems.

**PLEASE DON'T TOP TREES!**

Topping leads to trunk and root rot. Topping destroys tree dignity.



When leaders on young trees or whips are cut for early training, make cuts only at nodes—where buds or branches meet the stem. Never make cuts between nodes, Never leave stubs.

**MYTH AND MISTAKE!**

It is wrong to remove healthy living branches at planting time. It is wrong to attempt to balance the top of the tree with the roots. Wait at least one year after planting before pruning. Remove dead and dying branches anytime.

## VANDALISM

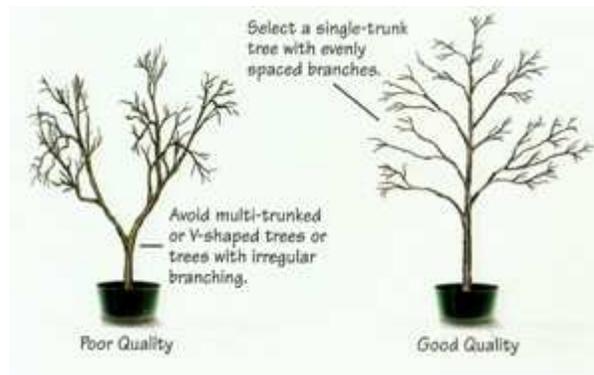
Where there may be a problem with vandalism, plant larger trees with lowest branches at least 10 feet (3 meters) above the ground.

\*The source of the above information comes from the publication "Caring for Young Trees From Nurseries to Landscapes" by Dr. Alex L. Shigo.

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### START BY PURCHASING A QUALITY TREE

**Nursery Stock Selection**, for single trunk trees.



Choose quality trees with good branch structure, good root ball size relative to tree canopy, and a uniform canopy. Avoid trees with circling roots, signs of stress, and insect damage.

When selecting a tree, consider that smaller trees take less time to establish and will reduce the time you may need to irrigate your tree. The branches should be evenly distributed along the upper two thirds of the trunk. The tree should stand freely without stakes. Ask for assistance to ensure that you purchase the best available tree.

## Young Tree Pruning

Remove branches shown with dotted lines.

Remove crossing limbs and dead or broken limbs to avoid future structural defects.

Shorten but do not remove low branches on trunk to develop trunk thickness.

Remove co-dominant stems to develop a single trunk.

Sucker growth is poorly attached and should be removed.

Proper pruning cuts outside the branch collar prevent decay.



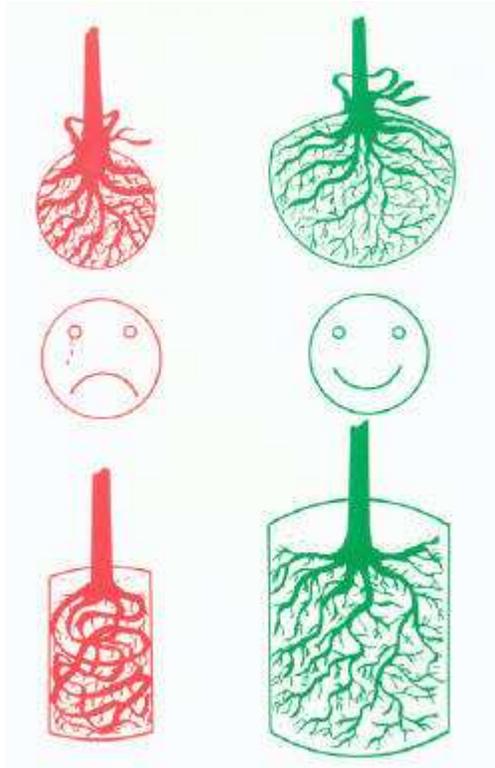
Pruning is not recommended until after your tree has overcome transplant stress and has a self-supporting root system. Before pruning any trees or hiring someone to prune your trees, consult with an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist.

\*The above information comes from a publication of the Florida Urban Forestry Council

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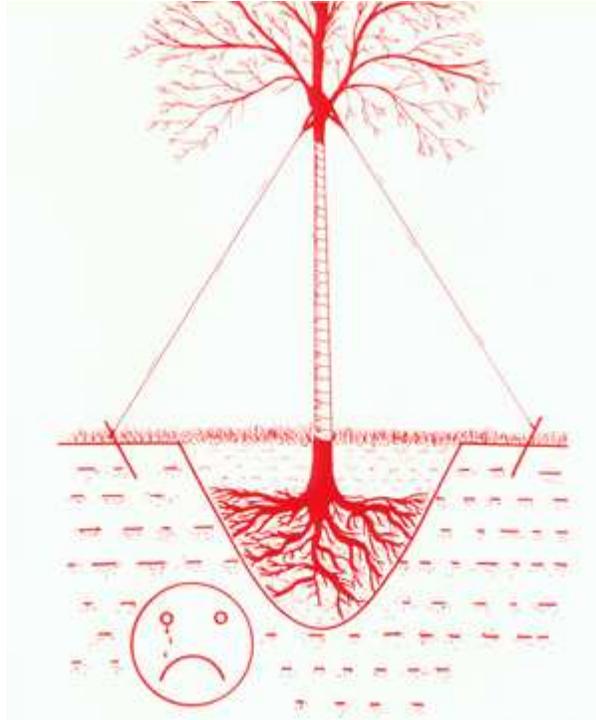
### 5 TIPS FOR HEALTHY TREES

#### **SELECT HEALTHY TREES**



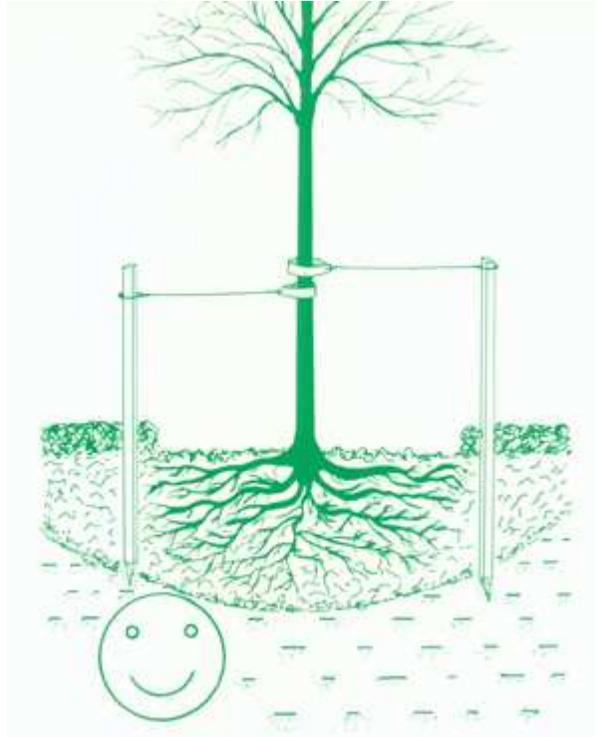
- Money is wasted when you buy or plant trees that have roots crowded or crushed in bags or containers.
- Check roots before you buy or plant.
- If only a few roots are crushed, remove them with a sharp cut.
- For more information on proper tree selection please visit the University of Florida website by [clicking here](#).

**DO NOT PLANT TOO DEEP**



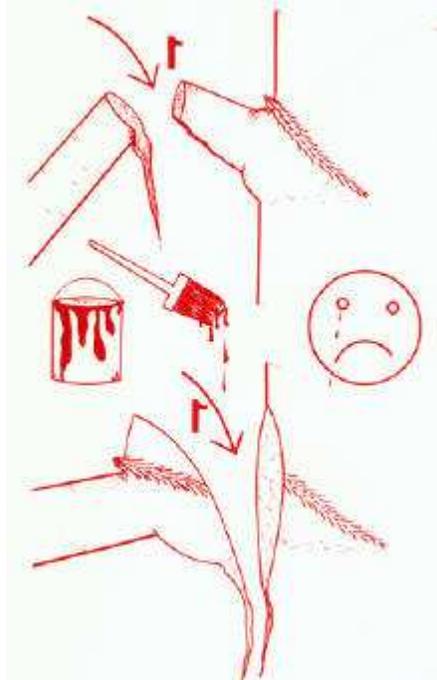
- Money is wasted when trees are planted too deep.
- Do not bury roots in small deep holes.
- Do not wrap trees.
- Do not amend the soil, unless the soil is very poor.
- Do not brace so tightly that the tree cannot sway.
- Do not brace with wire in a hose.
- Do not fertilize at planting time.
- Do not plant grass or flowers near the tree.
- Do not remove branches to balance crown with roots.

**PLANT PROPERLY**



- Plant at the depth where roots spread from the trunk.
- Prepare a planting site, not just a hole in the ground.
- Loosen the soil far beyond the dripline of the tree.
- Brace the tree only if it will not remain upright in a moderate wind.
- Brace with broad, belt-like materials that won't injure the bark.
- Mulch away from the trunk with composted material.
- Keep soil moist, not water-logged to the depth of the roots.
- Remove dead and dying branches.
- Wait until the second growing season to begin training cuts for shaping and to begin fertilizing.
- For more information on proper transplanting techniques please visit the University of Florida website by [clicking here](#).

**DO NOT REMOVE BRANCH COLLARS OR LEAVE STUBS**

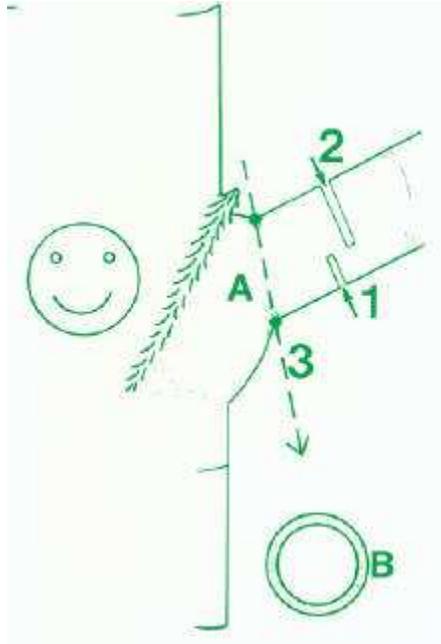


- Money is wasted when branches are pruned incorrectly.
- Painting will not help. Wound dressings do not stop rot.
- Incorrect pruning starts a long list of costly problems: cankers, sun scald, frost cracks, insect borers.

### **CAUTION!**

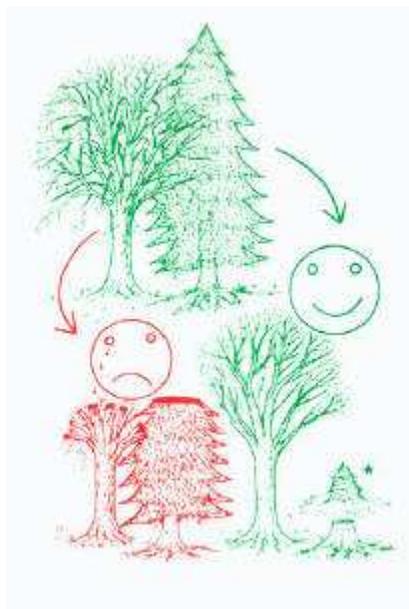
Homeowners and others who are not qualified tree care professionals should NEVER prune trees near power lines, NEVER use a chainsaw for pruning, and NEVER get on a ladder to prune. Even if you think you can do the job yourself, it is better, wiser, and safer to discuss your trees with a tree care professional first. Be sure your professional has insurance. Do not take chances!

### **PRUNE BRANCHES CORRECTLY**



- First, make cuts as shown by arrows 1 & 2.
- Make final cut at 3 as close as possible to the outside of the branch collar (A).
- A "doughnut" or circle of callus will form around correct cuts (B).
- For more information on proper pruning techniques please visit the University of Florida's website by [clicking here](#)

**STOP TOPPING TREES, TOPPING WASTES MONEY!**



- Money is wasted when trees are topped and mutilated because the treatment usually must be repeated several times and in the end the trees become very

- dangerous. Then more money is needed for treatments that reduce the high hazard risk.
- Trees that are topped and mutilated are usually those that have been planted in the wrong place: near power lines and buildings.
  - If a tree must be topped, then it is time for a new tree.
  - Do remove dead, dying and hazardous branches from mature trees.

### **MONEY AND TREES**

Trees provide many benefits for people and many other living things. The major benefit is that they trap more of the sun's energy than any other group of living things on this earth.

In a sense, trees bring in a great amount of "biological money" to our earth.

When your money is spent on treatments that hurt rather than help the tree, your money and the tree's biological money are both wasted.

Saving money for everybody is easy. All we need to do is learn a little about trees. Then we should base our treatments on this information.

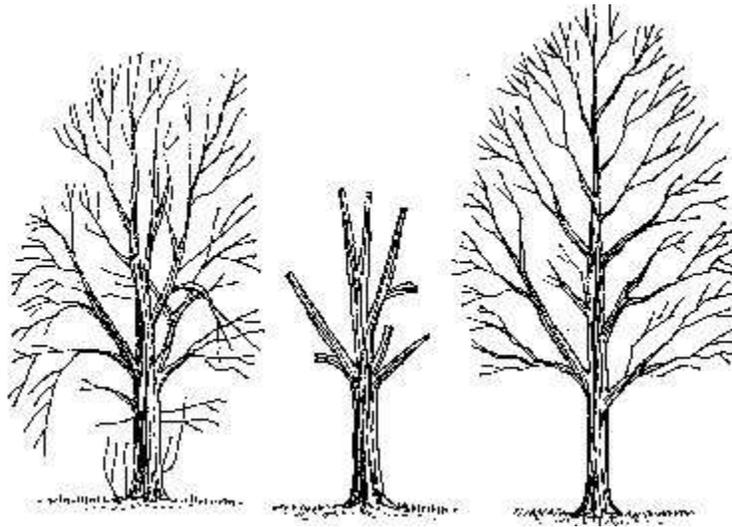
Start saving money by making the 5 simple adjustments. Then give your attention to these other problems that waste biological money and your money.

1. Soil compaction by walkways, car parking, play areas.
2. Construction injury, no protection and no prior plans with the developer.
3. Holes, holes and more holes for repeated injections and implants.
4. Wounds inflicted by lawnmowers and string trimmers.
5. Over watering, especially in dry climate areas of the world.
6. Road, roads and more roads in forests and parks.
7. Roots cut for sidewalks and for lawns.
8. Soil rototilled near trees so flowers can be planted.
9. Digging deeply into cavities and filling with abrasive materials.
10. Over use and incorrect use of herbicides.
11. Changing grade and excessive fill over roots.
12. Excessive use of salts for removal of ice.
13. Neglect.

### **REMEMBER WILDLIFE**

Trees support more communities of wildlife than any other living thing. When trees are destroyed, wildlife habitats are destroyed. Proper tree care benefits wildlife too. Big, old, healthy trees are best for wildlife.

\*The source material for the above information comes from "5 Minute Tree Care" by Shigo and Trees Associates.



A neglected shade tree

The work of a poorly chosen "tree Expert"

The work of a competent arborist

No more than 1/3 of the tree height should be elevated up when pruning lower branches for head clearance or visibility.

--by Palm Coast Paradise