



Pruning Trees within the City of Redmond



Pruning is the most common tree maintenance procedure. Although forest trees grow quite well with only nature's pruning, landscape trees require a higher level of care to maintain their safety and aesthetics. Pruning should be done with an understanding of how the tree responds to each cut. Improper pruning can cause damage that will last for the life of the tree, or worse, shorten the tree's life.



A permit is required to major prune any public tree within the City of Redmond. For further information on permit requirements see the publication, *City of Redmond Public Tree Ordinance: A Homeowner's Guide*. Copies are available at City Hall or online at http://www.ci.redmond.or.us/Department/Public_Works/

Topping should never be done and is a prohibited activity on any public tree within the City of Redmond. Topping is the cutting of a stem more than 2 years old at an indiscriminate location or back to a branch too small to keep the cut stem alive.



Reasons for Pruning

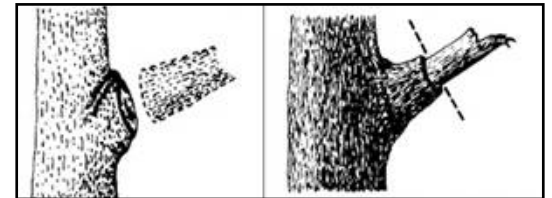
Because each cut has the potential to change the growth of the tree, no branch should be removed without a reason. Common reasons for pruning are to remove dead branches, to remove crowded or rubbing limbs, and to eliminate hazards. In most cases, mature trees should only be pruned as a corrective or preventive measure.

When to Prune

Most routine pruning to remove weak, diseased, or dead limbs can be accomplished at any time during the year with little effect on the tree. As a rule, growth is maximized and wound closure is fastest if pruning takes place after leaf drop and before the spring growth flush.

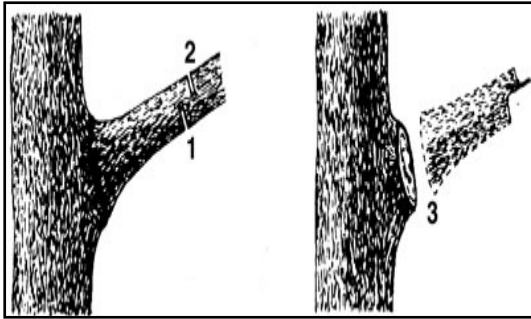
Heavy pruning just after the spring growth flush should be avoided. At that time, trees have just expended a great deal of energy to produce foliage and early shoot growth. Removal of a large percentage of foliage at that time can stress the tree. Additionally, it is best to avoid pruning tree species that are susceptible to particular pests during the time in which the pest is active, typically spring and summer.

Making Proper Pruning Cuts



Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar. Do not cut the collar as it contains trunk or parent branch tissue. If the trunk collar has grown out on a dead limb to be removed, make the cut just beyond the collar.

If a large limb is to be removed, its weight should first be reduced. This is done by making an undercut about 12 to 18 inches from the limb's point of attachment (1). Make a second cut from the top, directly above or a few inches farther out on the limb (2). Doing so removes the limb, leaving the 12- to 18-inch stub. Remove the stub by cutting back to the branch collar (3). This technique reduces the possibility of tearing the bark.



How Much Should Be Pruned?

The amount of live tissue that should be removed depends on the tree size, species, and age, as well as the pruning objectives.

If you have further questions regarding pruning trees within the City of Redmond, please contact Rick Torassa, City Arborist at 541-504-2000 or visit http://www.ci.redmond.or.us/Department/Public_Works/

Younger trees tolerate the removal of a higher percentage of living tissue better than mature trees do. An important principle to remember is that a tree can recover from several small pruning wounds faster than from one large wound.

A common mistake is to remove too much inner foliage and small branches. It is important to maintain an even distribution of foliage along large limbs and in the lower portion of the crown. Over thinning reduces the tree's sugar production capacity and can create tip-heavy limbs that are prone to failure.

Mature trees should require little routine pruning. A widely accepted rule of thumb is never to remove more than one-quarter of a tree's leaf-bearing crown. In a mature tree, even one-quarter could have negative effects. Removing even a single, large-diameter limb can create a wound that the tree may not be able to close. The older and larger a tree becomes, the less energy it has in reserve to close wounds and defend against decay or insect attack. The pruning of large mature trees is usually limited to removal of dead or potentially hazardous limbs.

Hiring an Arborist

Pruning large trees can be dangerous. If pruning involves working above the ground or using power equipment, it is best to hire a professional arborist. Avoid using the services of any tree company that advertises topping as a service provided or uses tree climbing spikes to climb trees that are being pruned.

The City of Redmond has adopted the American National Standards Institute A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations, ANSI A300 (Part 1)-2001 Pruning. The standards are available for viewing at the City Hall permit desk or the front counter of the Public Works Building.

This information is from the [International Society of Arboriculture \(ISA\)](http://www.treesaregood.com), a non-profit organization supporting tree care research around the world and dedicated to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees. For additional information on tree care, including pruning, visit:

<http://www.treesaregood.com>.