

Plant A Tree: An Alaska Guide to Tree Care



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Prune your tree

- Begin pruning to develop a strong structure in the second or third growing season.
- Learn about the species you are pruning and how they respond to pruning. For example, if you prune lilacs early in the season, you will remove flower buds.
- If you can't prune with both feet on the ground, hire an arborist.
- Where possible, favor branches that form wide angles with the trunk: 45 to 90 degrees is ideal.
- Do not top tree, make cuts flush with trunk or leave stubs.
- Try to prune as little as necessary to achieve your goal. Do not remove more than one-fourth of a tree's live foliage in a season.
- For most species, the tree should have a single trunk. Remove dead and defective branches and select a strong leader that will produce a branch growing in the desired direction (usually outward).
- Conifers need little pruning; prune to maintain one central leader.
- Make a sharp, clean cut at a slight angle about ¼ inch beyond the bud.

Correct



cut made too high above a bud

Incorrect

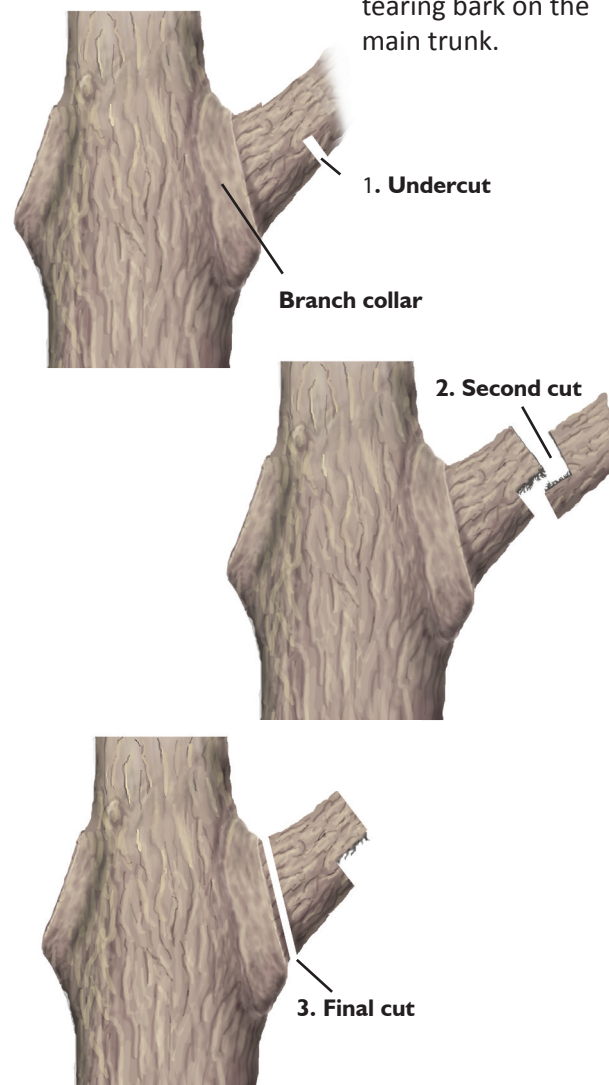


cut made too close to bud, too angular

wrong angle of cut



- If a branch is too large to support when pruning, make an undercut about 8 inches above the point of attachment, one-third of the branch diameter. Next, make an overcut above and beyond the undercut to allow the branch to break off at the undercut. Finally, make the final cut outside the branch bark ridge and branch collar (see diagram). This method will prevent the falling branch from tearing bark on the main trunk.



- Painting pruning cuts or any wound is not recommended. This practice doesn't prevent or reduce decay and may interfere with the tree's natural ability to seal the wound.

- Make each cut carefully. Avoid leaving jagged edges or torn bark. Use sharp bypass pruning shears and a pruning saw with teeth that cut when you pull.
- Never prune trees or branches within 10 feet of a utility line.

Prune your tree

Remove branches shown with dotted lines:

- Remove limbs that extend far beyond the natural outline of the crown.
- Remove competing stems to develop a single trunk.
- Remove branches with very narrow, v-shaped angles.
- Remove dead, broken or rubbing limbs.
- Remove limbs that turn in toward the trunk.
- Always make pruning cuts on outside of the branch collar.
- Don't leave branch stubs.
- Remove root suckers and water sprouts.
- Shorten low branches to develop trunk thickness.

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This printing was paid for by the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA)