Proper Tree Pruning
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To develop tree with a strong and desirable form, it is important to learn how to properly prune a tree. If trees are pruned properly when they are young, they will require less corrective pruning when they mature. Common reasons for pruning a tree are to remove dead branches, to remove crowed or rubbing branches, or to eliminate hazards.

Before pruning a tree, keep these things in mind. If pruning is not done right, it can cause damage to the tree last for the whole life of the tree. When a tree is wounded (caused by not proper pruning) it must grow over, containing the wound inside the tree. Make sure that there is a purpose for making a cut on the tree because each cut can change the whole growth of the tree. Heavy pruning can be a health stress for the tree.

Keeping these in mind, its time to prune the tree by making proper cuts. Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar. The branch collar should not be damaged or removed because it contains trunk or parent branch tissue. If a permanent branch needs to be shortened, cut back to lateral branch at least one-third the diameter of the branch. If cuts are between buds and branches, it may lead to sprout production, stem decay, and misdirected growth. If a large limb is to be removed, its weight should be first reduced. This is done by first making a cut from underneath about 12-18 inches away from the point of attachment. Then make second cut a couple of inches farther out on the limb from the top. This will cause the limb to break off. Next remove the 12-18 inch stub by cutting back to the branch collar. You start an undercut the stub prior to cutting at 45 degree angle to the branch collar to prevent tearing the bark.

Along with proper pruning cuts, you might use the right pruning tools. For most small tree, most cuts can be made with a hand pruning shears. Please read the label when purchasing pruning shears. A one half inch pruning shear should not be used for 1 inch limb. Cuts larger than one half inch in diameter should be made with a pruning saw or loppers. All tools should be kept clean and sharp.

Too much should never be taken off a tree.   A common mistake is removing too many small branches and inner foliage. This is called lion tailing when you prune all the foliage off a branch except for the outer edge. It is important to keep an even distribution of inner foliage along large limbs and in lower portion of the crown. All branches contribute food and nutrients to the trunk and roots of a tree. Taking off too many branches will starve the tree, reduce growth, and cause stress. All branches should be well spaced radially and along the trunk.

Wound dressings were once thought to protect against insects and diseases as well as accelerate wound closure. However, research has shown that dressings do not reduce decay or rarely prevent insect and disease infestations. If you must use dressing on the

tree for cosmetic purposed, then use a thin coating of material that is non-toxic to the plant.