

# Pruning Trees in the Desert

Keeping Trees Healthy and Beautiful With Proper Pruning



*Pruning is a skill and an art. The skill is in making cuts in the right places that allow the wound to close properly and minimize the chance for decay. The art is in removing only the branches needed so that the tree remains attractive and in its natural form.*

## Reasons for Pruning

*Have a good reason to prune before starting*

- Remove dead, weakened or damaged branches.
- Remove crowded or rubbing limbs.
- Eliminate hazards in the landscape such as branches in walkways or those blocking safe visibility.
- Improve tree stability, balance, and wind resistance.
- Control or direct growth.

## Tools Needed for Pruning

*Use the proper pruning tool depending on the limb size.*

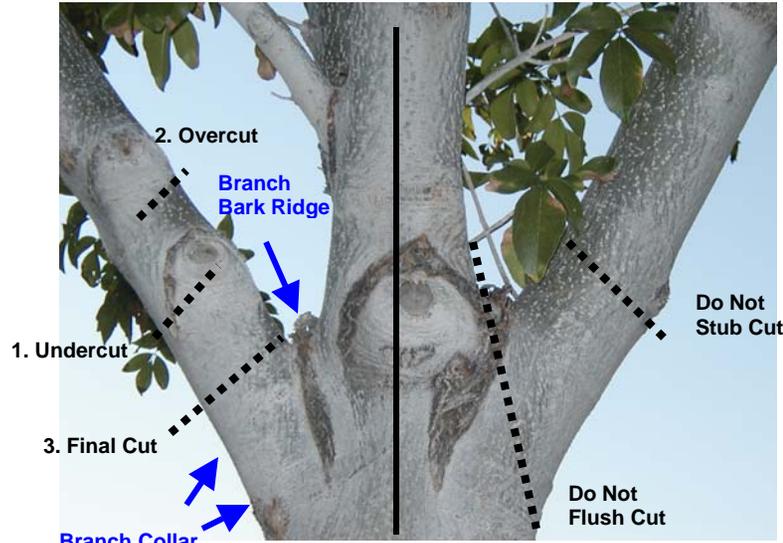


**Hand pruning shears** are used for limbs less than 1/2 inch in diameter.

**Pruning loppers** are used for limbs less than 1 inch in diameter.



**Pruning saws** are used on limbs measuring over 1 inch in diameter.



What to do

What NOT to do

## How To Prune

*Never remove more than 1/4 of a mature tree's leaves in a growing season.*

- Do not prune a newly planted tree during the first year, except to remove dead or badly damaged branches.
- Always cut back to a main stem or branch just outside the branch bark ridge and branch collar (this allows the wound to close properly).
- To not tip back, leave stubs or make a flush cut. These allow entry points for diseases and insects.
- For large branches use a three cut process to prevent bark from ripping down the main trunk (see above).

## Never Top a Tree!

*Because topping....*

- Is the indiscriminate cutting back of tree branches to stubs.
- Stresses trees by removing the leaves or "food factories" of the tree.
- Creates hazards since new shoots are weakly attached, making them prone to breakage.
- Makes trees unsightly by disfiguring their natural branching structure.

## Work Safely

*Don't forget these safety pointers while pruning:*

- Never prune a tree that is touching or near a utility line.
- Do not prune when you are overheated or tired.
- Use protective hats, gloves, and safety glasses.
- Do not climb a tree or use a ladder when pruning.

**Call a certified arborist** to have trees properly pruned or for additional tree care advice.



Chandler - Arizona

Water Conservation Office



Pruning paints or other sealants are not necessary. A properly pruned tree will be able to protect itself.