

ESSENTIAL PRUNING PRACTICES or WASH, RINSE REPEAT

When pruning, always be mindful of the fact that each cut has the potential of changing the tree considerably. There is art as well as science involved in pruning, so look at the tree from all sides before making a cut, proceed slowly, then step back and look it over again. This is the “wash, rinse, repeat” equivalent used in pruning.

The foliage and roots of a tree are vitally linked. If you remove too much foliage, the roots will die back as they receive fewer nutrients. A young, newly planted tree should only have broken or crossed branches removed, a young tree no more than 30% of its foliage removed, a medium-aged tree 25% and a mature tree 10%. Heavy foliage removal should not be done during times of stress, such as during a drought. Never have a tree topped,

(<http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/resources/whytoppinghurts.pdf>) as it causes weak growth to emerge, massive cuts from which the tree cannot recover and greatly reduces the health of the tree.

Trees have an amazing capacity to heal from injuries, especially if cuts are done at the proper points. When you look closely at where a branch connects to the tree, you will see both a branch bark ridge (which looks like a fold in the bark) and a branch collar (which looks like a swelling at the trunk-branch junction). Cuts should be done as close to the branch collar and bark ridge as possible without damaging them. The cells in this area are specialists in resisting disease and forming scar tissue. If a stub is left, it will die leaving ready access for disease and insects.



For a full explanation of pruning go to: <https://extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/FNR/FNR-506-W.pdf>