

Pruning Ornamental & Shade Trees

When to Prune:

- The best time to prune trees is during the dormant season.
*Late February – March. (However, once a tree is established after a couple years a cut or two is okay during the growing season).
- Anytime pruning is appropriate for a deceased, broken or dead branch.

Pruning tools to use:

- Anvil pruner, bypass pruner, lopping shears, and a pruning saw.
- I always clean tools with rubbing alcohol before cutting each plant to avoid spreading disease from a possible infected plant.
- For branches larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, it is best to use *lopping shears*.
- For branches larger than $1 \frac{1}{2}$ inches its best to use a *pruning saw*.

General pruning approach:

- Walk around all sides of the tree before starting to see how the tree is growing and branching before deciding which branches may need pruning. First remove unwanted sprouts or suckers from the base of the tree. Next look for branches that are broken, crossing or rubbing each other.
- Remove branches that are growing inward, toward the center of the plant.
*Keep in mind excessive pruning can cause unmanageable growth or put the tree into stress. ****Pruning takes energy away from the tree for growing and causes it to use stored resources to heal pruning cuts.**
- **Street trees:** New Town & City of St Charles have determined that branches along the sidewalks should be pruned to 9 feet high and 12 feet along streets which helps to avoid broken branches from large trucks.
- **Lawn trees:** Prune limbs to a height to allow you to mow or walk safely under while keeping the natural form of the tree.