Tree Pruning 101

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Pruning

- Why
- When
- How
- With what
- What happens if we don’t follow the rules?
Why Prune?

- Safety
- Health/form
- Appearance
- Production
- Over pruned tree:
- No lower branches
- No stem taper
- Slower growth
When to prune trees

- Best is late dormant season (Dec, Jan, Feb)
- Summer pruning for bleeders (late Aug, Sept, Oct.) (maple, birch, walnut etc.)
- Avoid spring growth period
- Avoid leaf color change
  - Nutrient retranslocation
When to prune shrubs and fruit trees

- **Shrubs without showy flowers**
  - Late winter / early spring before buds expand

- **Shrubs with showy flowers**
  - Immediately after bloom

- **Fruit trees**
  - Late winter / early spring before buds expand
Oaks are Special
Red more than White

Do not prune from March 1\textsuperscript{st} to Oct 15\textsuperscript{th} *
to minimize oak wilt transmission
Browning starts at the margin, progresses towards the petiole, and trees defoliate.

Red Oaks

Red Oak Leaf

Fall-like appearance

White Oak Leaf

White Oaks
Two Rules of Pruning

1. Correct multiple leaders as soon as possible
2. Leave branches on until 1” caliper; remove before 2”
Don’t get Lazy!!!

Branch collar

Branch bark ridge

Branch collar
Target pruning for tree health

1st = undercut
2nd = removal
3rd = stub removed
Pruned on 2/23/2016
April 12 2016
Flush Cut
SA= 1.43 sq. inch
WOUND DRESSINGS

Orange Shellac
Asphalt Paints
Creosote Paints
Tar
Epoxy
Liquid Electrical Tape
...

...
Topping - Old
- Wound closure problems
- Decay
- Weak branch attachment
Tipping
Fruit Tree Pruning - Apples

Managing Light Availability

Old style - one base breaks into 3 or 4 lateral trunks at 3’ above the ground
New style - one main stem with scaffold branches
   Dwarf and some semi dwarfs designed for trellis systems
   Semi dwarf to full standards are self supporting
Pruning Apple Trees in a nutshell

What to remove on a previously pruned tree – Old Style
1. Water sprouts
2. Branches that go straight up or down
3. Branches that are crossing/rubbing on other branches
4. Branches directly above/below other branches
   2-3 feet spacing above/below
5. No more than 30-40% removed in any one year

What to remove on a previously pruned tree – New Style
1. Water sprouts
2. Branches that go straight up or down
3. Branches that are crossing/rubbing
4. Branches directly above/below other branches
   that are not spaced at least 2-3 feet above/below
Fruit Tree Pruning - Pears

Managing Light Availability

1st rule – Pears do not understand what you are trying to make them do

2nd rule – Pears will grow up at all cost

3rd rule – Pears would rather give up and die than conform to your will
Fruit Tree Pruning - Peaches

Managing Light Availability

-Peaches have strong apical dominance

-Peaches have weak wood

-Prune to hollow the venter and create a vase shape

-Prune new wood back 30-50% to limit fruit production and breakdown
4-5 branches low

Minimize vertical branching

Reduce all new growth back 30-50 %
Pruning Overgrown Shrubs

**Step 1**- Gas up the saw and wait for spouse to leave!

**Step 2**- Working quickly but safely cut as close to the ground as possible and removal all debris

****If step 2 is done correctly you will be at the store buying a new saw chain when spouse returns home – enter home carefully

**Step 3**- Wait! Coppiced shrubs will resprout from the root collar
Shrub Maintenance

• Regular pruning cycle for most shrubs
  – 5 year removal of old wood shoots
  – Renewed sprouts flower and fruit more
  – Control height and vigor
  – Less disease problems when pruned
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- Read this short article
- Then follow this link to find or verify an applicator

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