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
- Appearance
- Production
Pruning

Not Pruning
When to Prune

• Best is late dormant season (Jan, Feb)
• Summer pruning for bleeders (maple, birch, walnut etc.)
• Avoid spring growth period
• Avoid leaf color change
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
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!!!
Bad pruning tells a story!

Pruned when the stem was too large introduced rot into the heartwood
Hazard trees get their start
Collar cut

Decay already started
Branch Bark Ridge – OK

Branch Bark Collar – too long
Decay will start
Stub left too long

One cut method – bottom tear out

Long time for new growth to seal over this wound area
Branch bark Ridge – too long

Sides – just right

Branch Bark Collar – too close
Over Pruning – When is a tree no longer a tree?

Tree Was Removed 15
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

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   that are not spaced at least 2-3 feet above/below
Pruning Apple Trees in a nutshell

Where to start on an old neglected tree
1. Make 1 major pruning removal each year until center “core” of tree is open
2. Reduce the height of the tree by target pruning the top remaining branches should be lateral
3. Branches that go straight up or down
4. Branches that are crossing/rubbing on other branches
5. Branches directly above/below other branches that are not spaced at least 2-3 feet above/below