

TREE PRUNING

NEVER FLAT-TOP PLANTS

DROP PRUNE TO CONTROL SPREAD AND LIGHTEN LOAD.

PRUNE LOWER BRANCHES TO FORCE GROWTH UPWARD, AND ALLOW PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC.



ELMS:

Prune in midsummer. Prune young trees to straight leaders. Oriental types of Elms (Siberian Elm and Chinese Elm) produce twin leaders during sapling stage. Cut off one of those leaders at the crotch as soon as it is produced.

Elms should also never be "flat-topped". Also prune lower branches up to force the growth upwards, and allow open space for pedestrians.

Older Oriental Elms need to be "drop-pruned" every second or third year, removing as much as a third of the top each time.

Drop-pruning is a technique that calls for dropping or lowering your pruning cut to a crotch. Trees are drop-pruned when branches are too long or too heavy or when the crown is so dense that no light gets through to lawn or garden. On trees not above 20 to 30 feet, say, you can probably do the job yourself. Before you get to work, examine the form of your tree.

Begin at the outer tip of a large limb and follow down toward the trunk; soon you come to a crotch; a little farther and there is another crotch and so on down to the main body of the limb. Sometimes the sides of a crotch are of almost equal size; sometimes one branch is much heavier than the other. Sometimes one side grows into the open while the other crowds into a dense area in the crown of a tree.

You can cut off one of the two branches at the farthest part of a limb. In this way you can somewhat lighten the load of that limb and you may also relieve crowding. If you go deeper into the tree to make the cut at an inner crotch, you can take out a much bigger limb and make a larger opening in the crown. By drop-

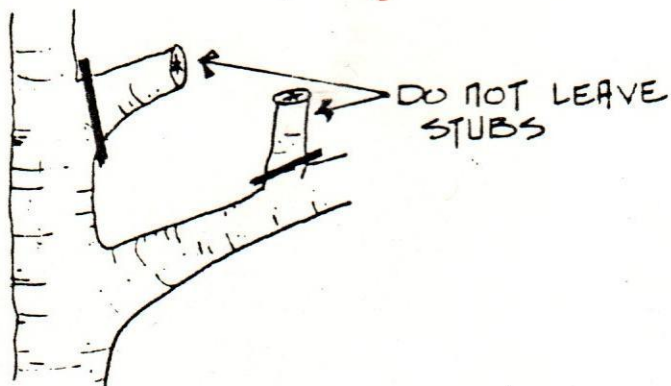
pruning, you can take out a few limbs high in the tree, a few more at crotches where limbs are 3 to 4 inches thick and perhaps, even more branches down near the trunk where crotches are narrow and tight. A skilled arborist pruning in this way, can remove as much as half the bulk of a large tree without altering its good appearance; the crown will simply look less dense.

Avoid leaving a stub when you drop-prune. Try to angle your cut on the limb you are removing so that it almost equals the angle of the limb you are saving. Again if you are taking off large limbs and using a saw work in two steps.

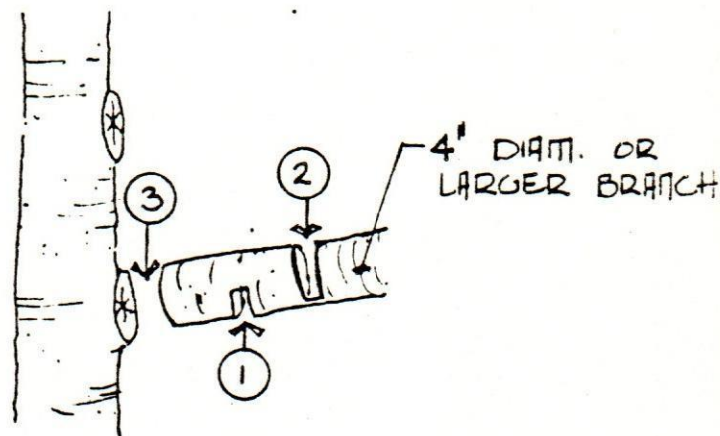
Take down a large limb in sections to avoid tearing bark and cambium tissue. Such stripping is harmful to the tree and inevitably occurs when a partially cut limb falls of its own weight. If the sections are large, rope them first. Carry the rope through a crotch higher in the tree and tie it to a neighboring tree; then lower the pieces carefully. Any limb thicker than your wrist should be taken down in two steps.

First, undercut, that is cut up from the bottom, about a third of the way through the limb at a point 6 to 8 inches from the trunk. Next cut directly above, slightly beyond, or inside this first cut to drop the limb, leaving a stub on the tree. To remove this stub, undercut and then overcut it, working tight against the trunk. If the stub is more than 4 inches or so thick, you had better rope it to make cutting easier.

If you are very good with a saw and your two cuts were lined up well, the job is done. More likely you will need to use a draw knife to smooth the face of the cut and a heavy pruning or pocket-knife to whittle a smooth edge, beveling back the bark all round the wound. Finally seal the cut with tree-wound dressing. If the cut doesn't heal over in a year, reseal it each spring until it does. Do call in a professional tree man of large shade trees. These demand special climbing equipment, long-handled cutting equipment, and other paraphernalia, as well as more than average skill and judgement.



Make all pruning cuts flush with trunk or side branch. Do not leave stubs.



Make the tree cuts shown to avoid ripping bark. Number 1 cut is an undercut 8 inches from the trunk. Number 2 is a downward cut made above and just beyond the first cut. In any case, the first cuts remove most of the limb and take a lot of weight from the stub. Number 3 severs the stub with a clean cut.