

# PRODUCTIVE PRUNING

ORNAMENTAL TREES  
AND SHRUBS





PRUNING AND TRAINING: A Science and  
an Art...

# TOOLS YOU MAY NEED



$\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide  
stems



4 inch or less wide  
stems



2 inch wide  
stems



# TOOL CARE

- Disinfect blades
  - Rubbing alcohol with clean rag or paper towel.
  - Wipe dirt and sap from the blades before each cut.
- Follow care directions from manufacturers.
  - Remove rust from blades.
  - Oil joints and springs
  - Sharpen dull edges



# CORRECT REASONS TO PRUNE



HEALTH



HAZARD



SHAPE

## INCORRECT REASONS TO PRUNE

- I have extra time
- Everyone else is doing it right now
- To “open” the tree up (not needed for  
ornamentals!)
- It is a spring cleanup project

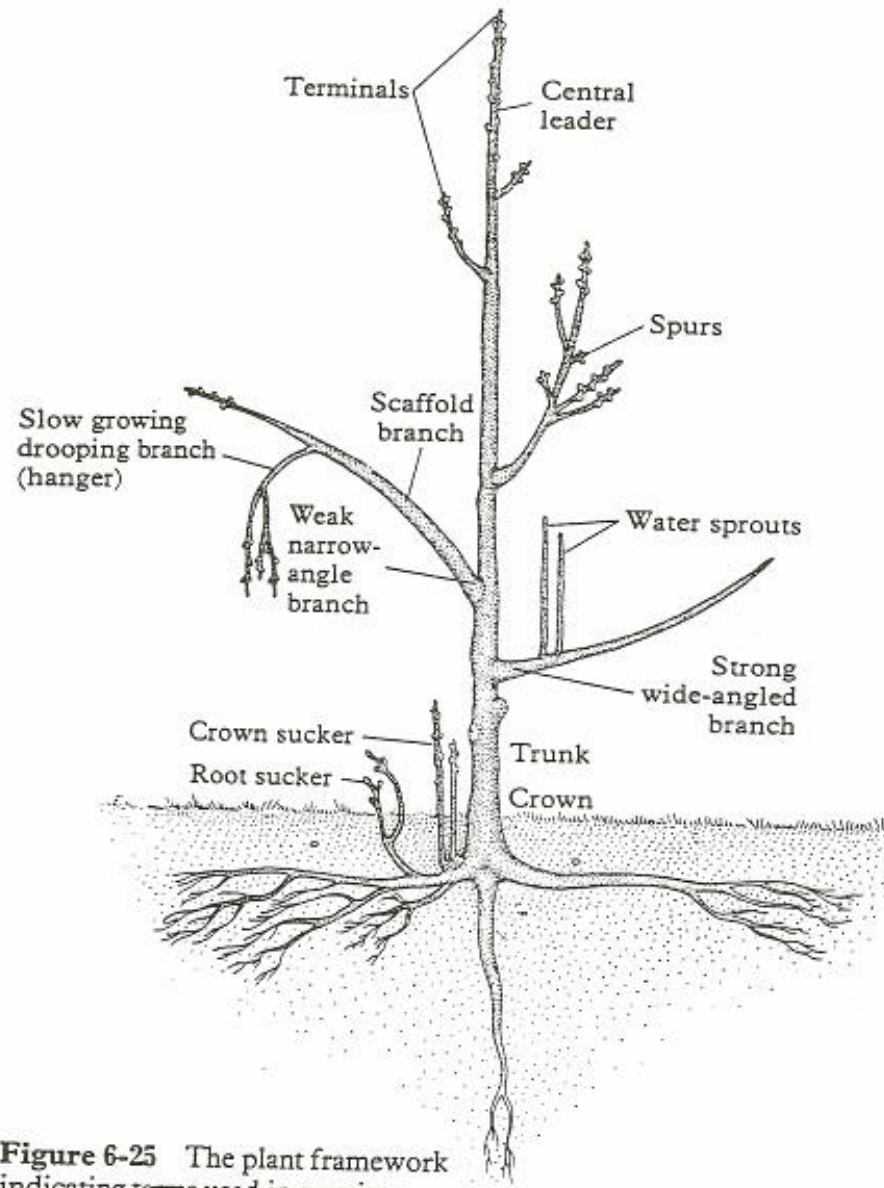
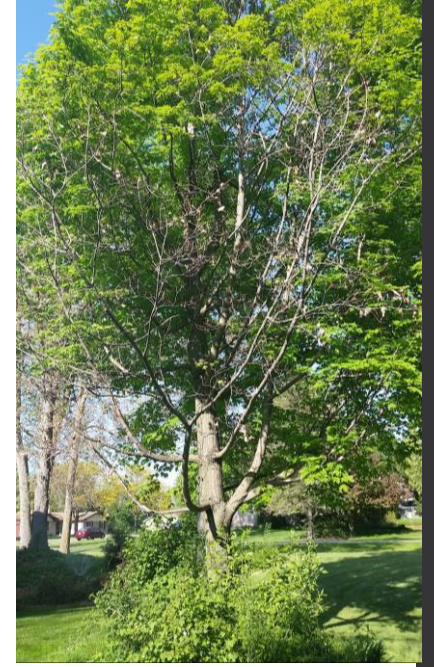


**Figure 6-25** The plant framework indicating terms used in pruning.

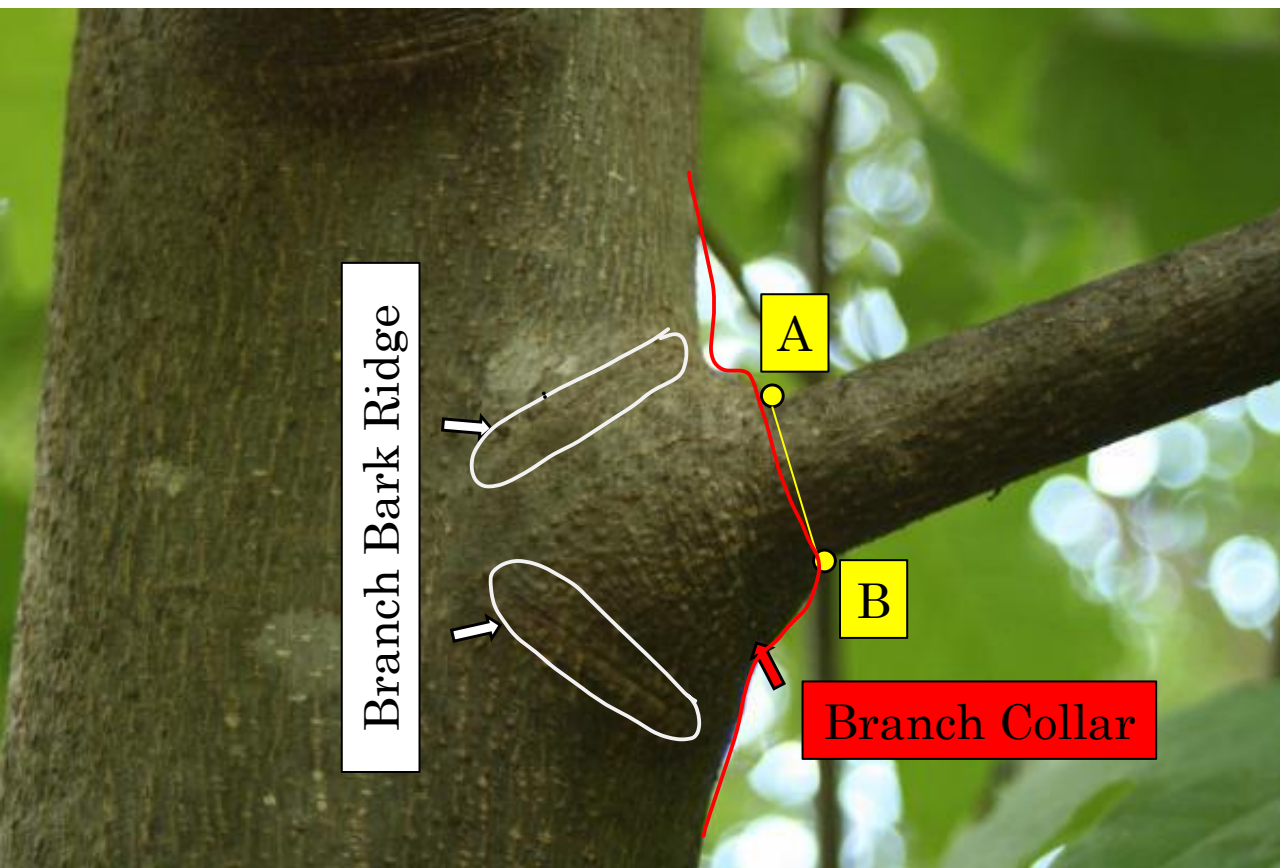
# BASIC TREE INFORMATION

# WHAT DO YOU PRUNE ON ORNAMENTALS

- Dead or dying material
- Branches that are crossing
- Suckers or watersprouts
- Small branches from the inside of the tree
- Branches growing in the wrong direction

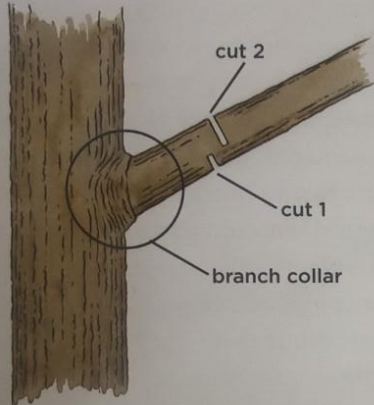


# TREE PRUNING TECHNIQUES

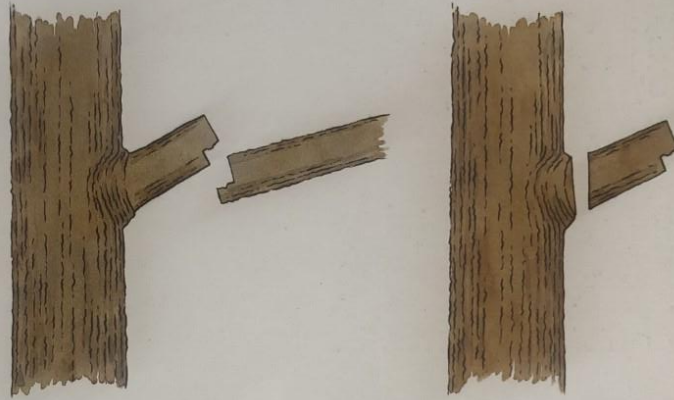


# TREE PRUNING TECHNIQUES

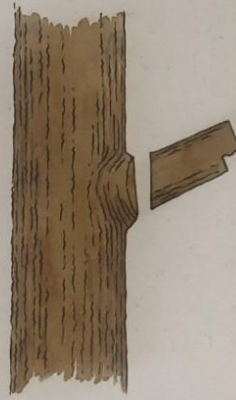
## THE THREE-PART CUT



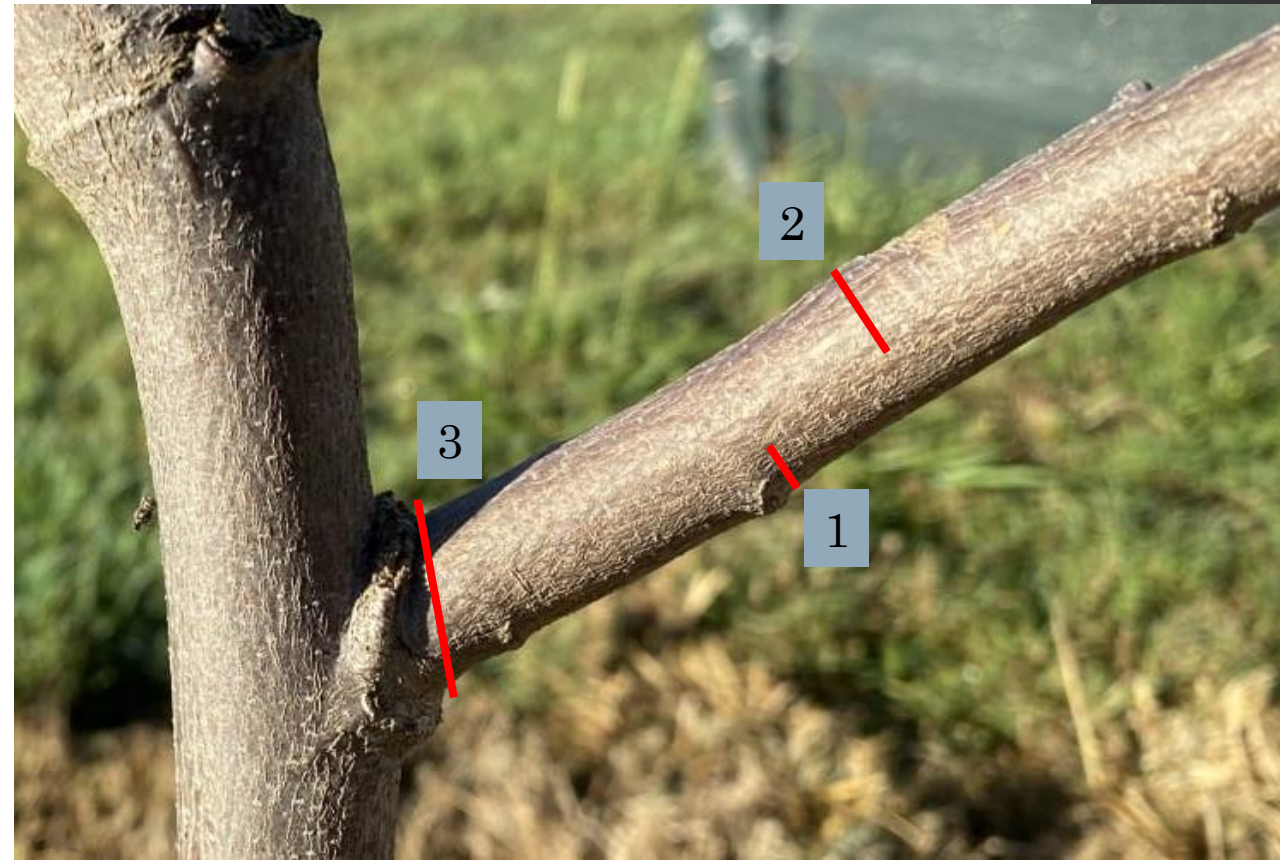
1 Make a short cut under the branch away from the branch collar, then make a second cut above and farther out on the branch.



2 Remove the bulk of the limb.



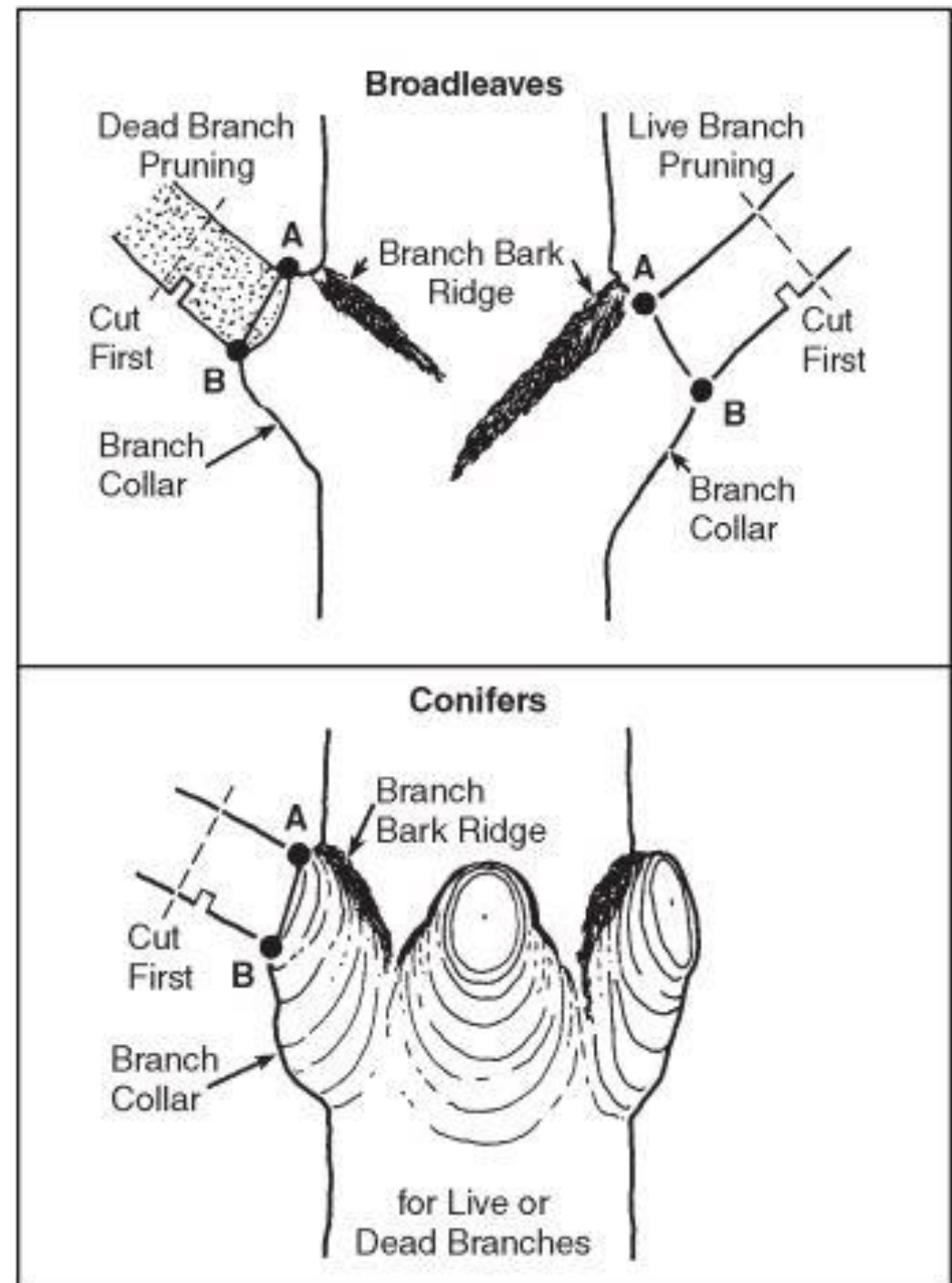
3 Remove the rest of the limb by cutting the branch off at the collar from top to bottom. The collar's size and shape affect the cutting angle for each particular branch. Don't leave a stub on the collar, but avoid cutting branches flush with the trunk.



# TREE PRUNING TECHNIQUES

- Remove as much of the branch as you can
  - DO NOT
    - Cut flush to the trunk
    - Leave a stub
- Natural Target Cuts
  - From the Branch Bark Ridge to the Branch collar
  - Leave a bump- not a stub
  - Make the cut to slant out and down- not flush

\*These practices help to tree to grow over the cut quickly.



# PRUNING CUTS- INCORRECT



# PRUNING CUTS- CORRECT



# HEALING WOUNDS

## CORRECT HEALING PROCESS

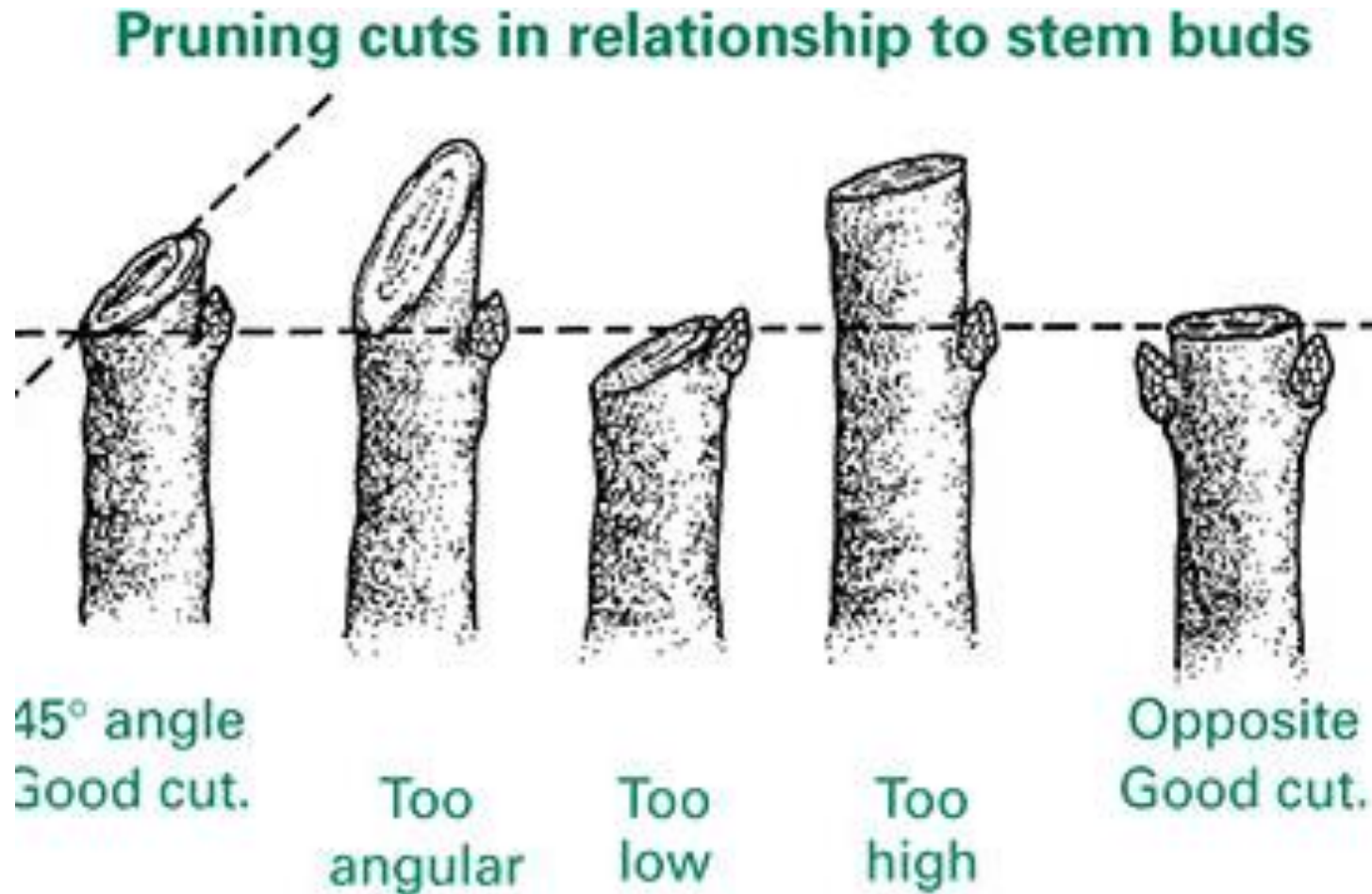
- Let the wounds heal in open air- wound dressings are not needed.
- EXCEPTION: Summer wound- wrap in hot/dry conditions. Should be removed within 2-3 weeks.



## INCORRECT HEALING PROCESS



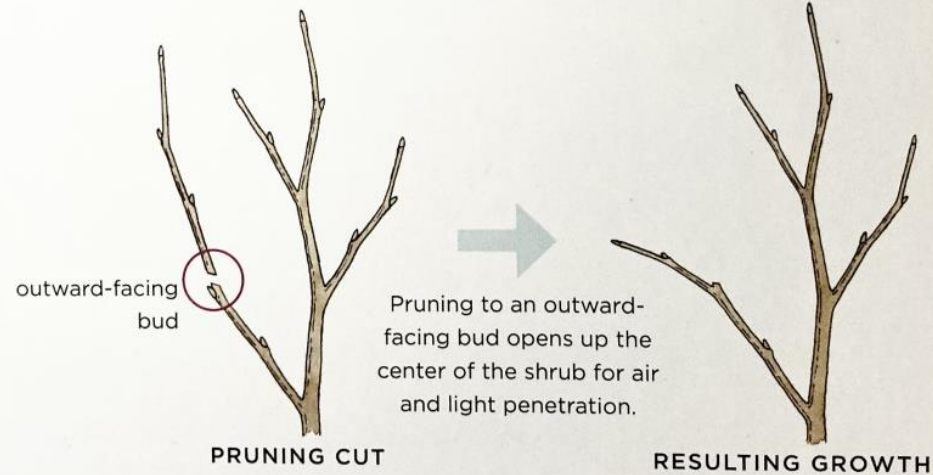
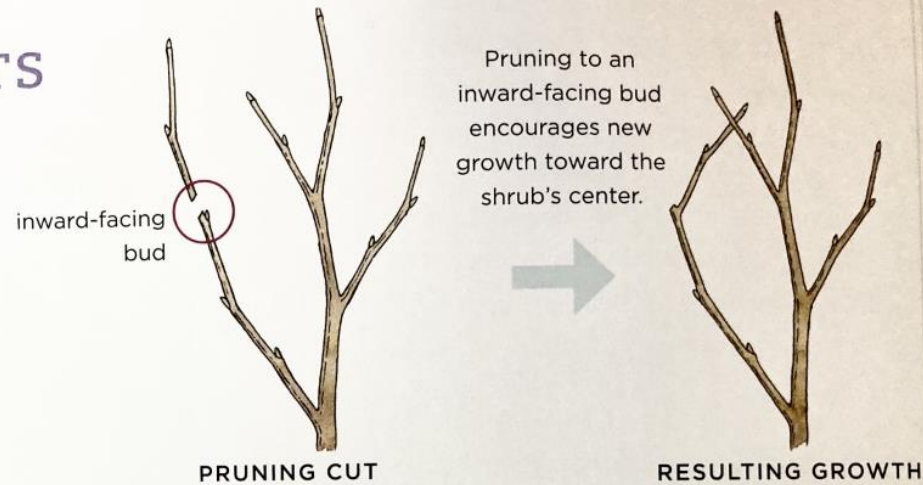
# SHRUB PRUNING TECHNIQUES



- Shouldn't be any huge branches to prune- 3 cut method usually not needed.
- A FEW DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES
  - Natural shaping
  - Rejuvenating
  - Hedging
  - Coppicing
  - Pollarding

## PRUNING CUTS

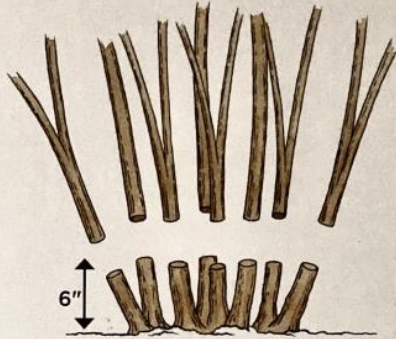
Check your handiwork frequently. Think about the shrub's natural shape and cut stems to inward or outward facing buds or branches to enhance the form. When in doubt about whether or not to prune a particular branch, be conservative: skip it and move on.



# NATURAL SHAPING

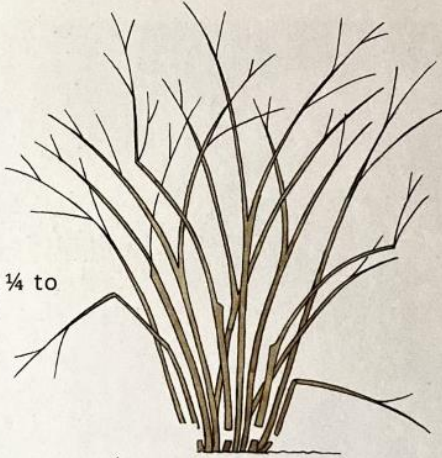
## TWO OPTIONS

1 Drastic  
Renewal  
Pruning



2 Gradual  
Renewal  
Pruning

YEAR 1: Remove  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  of branches



YEAR 2: Remove  
another  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  of branches

# REJUVENATING

## Examples

- Buddleja davidii:  
Butterfly Bush



- Spirea species:  
Spirea



- Cornus sericea:  
Red-twig Dogwood



- Caryopteris:  
Bluebeard





# HEDGING

## Examples for Formal Hedges

- Boxwoods
- Holly
- Privet
- Yew

## Examples for Informal Hedges

- Yew
- Lilac
- Chinese Juniper
- Viburnum

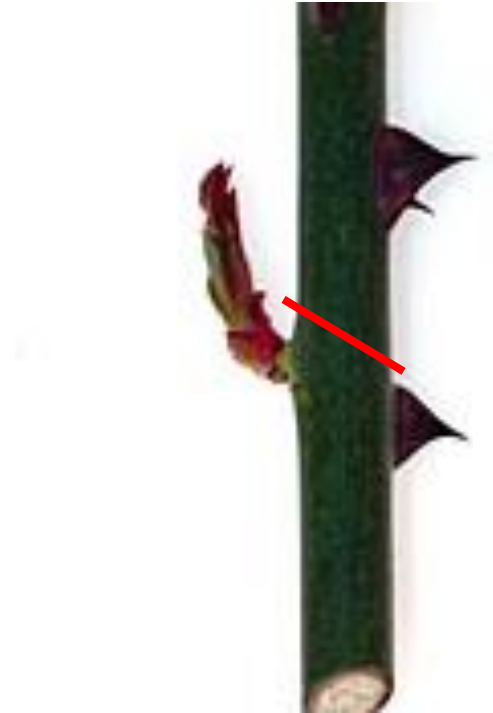
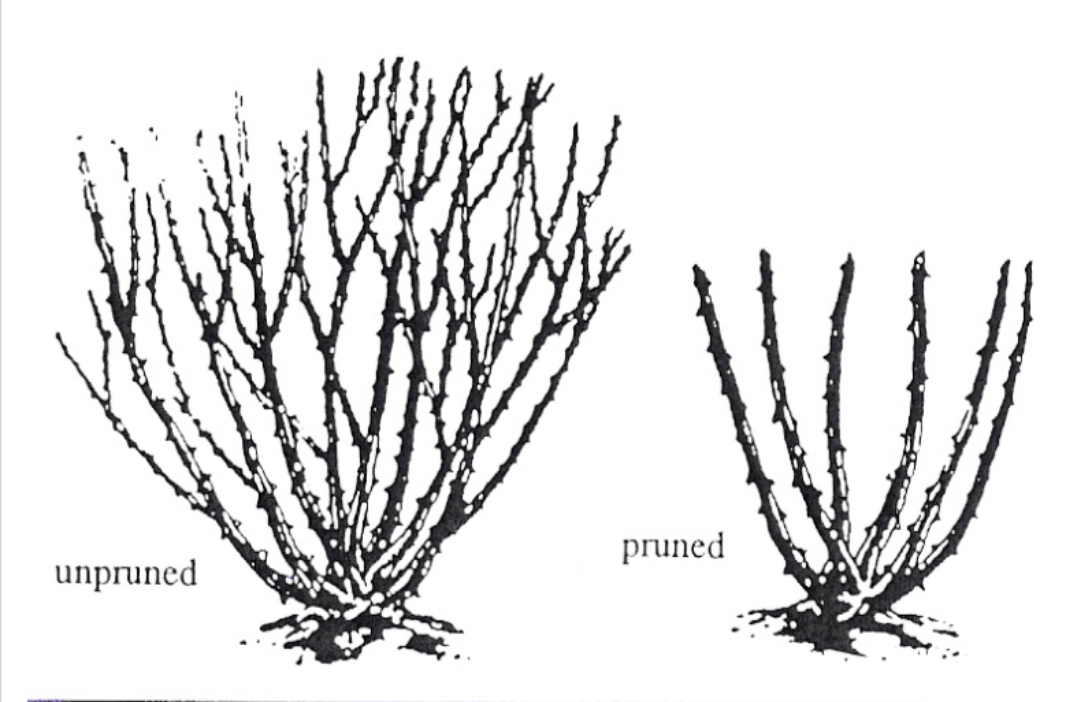


# COPPICING AND POLLARDING



# PRUNING ROSES

- Prune during dormancy
- Reasons to prune:
  - Remove deadwood
  - Promote growth
  - Remove canes growing inward
  - Remove “dumb” canes
- Remove 1/3-1/2 of the height
- Leave 5-12 canes 1.5-2’ tall
- Keep the center of the plant open





## WHEN TO PRUNE

- **Best time:** Late winter/ early spring
  - Before bud swell- DON'T PRUNE OFF YOUR NEW BUDS!
- Note: some trees may “bleed”, but it should not be a problem and will stop within a couple days



# WHEN TO PRUNE

- **WORST TIME:** Late Spring
  - The active growth period! Don't cut off your new leaves and buds!
  - Bark is tender and can easily be damaged
  - **EXCEPTION:** Some very early spring blooming shrubs can be pruned back after blooming- encourages more blooms in the next year.
    - Examples: Forsythia and Lilac
- **NEXT TO WORST:** Fall
  - Wounds received from pruning can more easily be infected.



# WHEN TO PRUNE

- **RISKY TIME:** Summer
  - Can stimulate new growth
  - Not enough time to harden off before it gets cold-causing winter damage.
  - Surrounding tissue die back
  - **EXCEPTION:** Prune to control excessive growth and water sprouts.

# OTHER PRUNING NOTES

- WHEN PLANTING A TREE
  - Only prune out dead and/or broken branches
- DAMAGE HAPPENS
  - Prune as soon as possible after damage or death
    - Causes could be storms, vandalism, accidental, etc.
  - This can prevent insect or disease problems
- PRUNE EARLY
  - Prune when the tree is young
  - Before branches are bigger than a 2 in. diameter
  - Try to stay away from pruning large branches
  - Avoid letting serious problem happen





# HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU PRUNE?

- Stick to the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> rule.
  - Never take more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the tree each year
  - When pruning off a large branch- There should still be another supportive branch that is at least 1/3<sup>rd</sup> the diameter of the branch being removed.
  - Don't prune more than 20-25% of the leaves per year

# TOPPING: Removal of branches with no regard to where they attach, usually leaving stubs.

- Not the best
  - It causes problems:
    - Poor tree health
    - Decay in the leftover stubs
    - Re-growth is very quick- maintenance will be consistent
- Better solutions
  - Directional Pruning
    - Removing branches that guide the tree to grow a specific way
    - How to do it:
      - Find the branch you would like to be removed
      - Follow it from the tip to a connecting healthy branch that is growing in the correct direction/
      - Use a correct pruning techniques to remove.
- **BEST SOLUTION**: Plant a tree that won't get too tall.





# SAFETY

- Use a ladder correctly!
- Look out below!
- If there are powerlines involved, call a professional

# RESOURCES

- USU extension
  - <https://forestry.usu.edu/news/utah-forest-facts/pruning-landscape-trees-an-overview>
  - <https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/ou-files/PruningHandout-OY-Mar2017.pdf>
  - <https://extension.usu.edu/htm/publications>
- <http://utahpests.usu.edu/IPM/htm/advisories/treefruit/>
- [weberbasin.com/conservation](http://weberbasin.com/conservation) - for more info and resources and this slide presentation.
- *“The Homeowner’s complete Tree & Shrub Handbook”* Penelope O’Sullivan