

REASONS FOR PRUNING

No cut should ever be made on a tree or shrub unless the Arborist knows the precise reason for making it. The most common reasons follow.

SAFETY – Remove dead or diseased branches or leaders that are large enough to injure people or animals or cause property damage if they fall. Live branches and leaders that cannot be securely cabled or braced to prevent breakage in high winds or under the weight of ice, snow or wet foliage should be shortened, reduced in weight or completely removed. Prune trees that lean dangerously; prune them heavily on the side toward which they lean and lightly on the opposite side to more evenly balance the weight and encourage new growth on the opposite side. Remove low limbs that interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic or that obscure traffic signs or street intersections. Also remove limbs that significantly reduce the effects of street lighting, especially in high traffic or high crime areas.

TREE HEALTH – General thinning helps revitalize a weak tree by allowing it to channel more energy to the remaining branches. Take out dead, dying and diseased parts to reduce the possibility of penetration by insects, disease or decay organisms. Thinning out live branches allows better air circulation through and under the crown and lets sunlight filter through. Remove suckers and water sprouts because they develop at the expense of more desirable growth. Prune out or cut girdling roots to prevent strangulation of parts of the tree. When branches interfere with each other, remove one or mechanically stabilize them to prevent rubbing. Because the crown and the root system have a balanced relationship, it may be necessary to reduce or limit crown size of trees whose root system is damaged or limited by underground obstructions.

APPEARANCE – Prune trees and shrubs to maintain desired, characteristic of symmetrical shapes that would otherwise be lost due to poor growth habits or obstructions within the growing space.

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY – Growth patterns that are likely to result in structural weaknesses later (especially “V” crotches) can be corrected by early pruning. Train or encourage young trees to grow in desired ways by pruning. The objective is to promote growth of an attractive, sturdy, safe tree that is representative of its species and consistent with its growing space.

LINE CLEARANCE - Remove tree parts that interfere with or overhang utility lines to meet required clearances with as little damage as possible to the overall health, beauty and usefulness of the tree.

STORM OR PHYSICAL DAMAGE – The object is to save as much of the tree as possible by completing the removal of damaged parts and reshaping the tree in a way that is most likely to restore it to an aesthetically pleasing appearance. Before starting, decide whether a severely damaged tree is worth salvaging.

VISTA – Selectively remove plant parts that obscure the view of a distant river, valley or mountain. This kind of pruning requires artistic vision and the teamwork of at least two people.