THE ART OF PRUNING

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WHY DO WE PRUNE WOODY PLANTS?

- **First:** The imperative for pruning! Never remove a branch without a reason.
  - Crown reduction
  - Structural form
  - Dead, diseased, damaged or disgusting
  - *****Training young trees*****

- Pruning goals are as varied as the plants on the site.
  - Improve tree health
  - Accommodate human needs
  - Accommodate other plants in the landscape
  - Create desired visual effects and ambiance
Timing for pruning is often dictated by the desired results such as fruiting, flowering, shade, head room, reduction, cleaning, etc.

To prevent unacceptable damage to the tree or its production.
- Sap drainage is unsightly, but does not have a negative impact in most cases.
- Wind passage reduction to prevent branch breakage.
- Reduce wind pressure when roots are in overly moist soil

To enhance or control production

Showcase flowering
1. Remove all broken, dead, damaged or dying branches.

2. Select and establish a dominant leader (some trees, like peaches, are designed to have multiple leaders).
   - Any competing stems, in most situations, should be subordinated or removed.
   - Co-dominant stems will result in the development of included bark and weaken the tree; so select the best and remove the other.

3. Select and establish the lowest permanent branch or scaffold.

4. Clean and shape existing scaffold branches

5. Select temporary subordinate branches for central leader caliper development
Crown cleaning, selective removal of the four D’s
Thinning, selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and sir movement.
  + Can lead to water sprouts if you are too aggressive
Crown raising, clearing out the lower branches (spruce, fir, pine, juniper, fruit varieties, etc.)
Crown reduction, to reduce the size of the tree
**Topping or heading, not an acceptable method!!!!!!!**
Restoration pruning to improve structure & appearance
Utility pruning (nearly always ugly but doesn’t have to be)
WHY WE NEVER, EVER, USE HEADING OR TOPPING CUTS

- Starvation
- Shock
- Insects and Disease
- Weak Limbs putting property at risk
- Rapid, new, weak, uncontrolled Growth
- Tree Death
- Ugliness
- Cost (long term it is very high)
Pollarding (only accepted heading program)

- Inter-nodal pruning processes are used to set up the pollarding structure
- Creates two dimensional trees for specific purposes
- Used for special tree types for walls, and specialty production of some fruits
Once thought to accelerate wound closure and reduce decay

It’s a cosmetic process that does no good for the tree. Fact; in most cases it is very detrimental.

If must use, use a thin non-phytotoxic material or grafting wax
PRUNING TOOLS

- Sharp and clean
- Avoid anvil face cutting tools
- Use bypass blades
- Sharp saws
- Sterilize tools when working on any tree before moving to the next tree
  - Use a material that does not harm the tree or damage pruning equipment
  - Bleach is a commonly used sterilization material
Substances usually used in minuscule quantities that alter or enhance the growth of trees.

- Can increase or decrease growth, flowering and development
- Reduce water sprout production

Depending on the desired results can use gibberellins or anti-gibberellins.
THE END