



Proper Tree and Palm Pruning

Proper pruning is vital to the health of your tree and every cut has the potential to change the growth of your tree permanently. Properly trained young trees will develop a strong structure that requires less corrective pruning as they mature. It is extremely important to make the correct pruning cuts in order for the tree to be able to protect itself from pests, fungus, bacteria, viruses and decay. Trees should never be hat-racked, shaped, over-lifted or over-thinned.

Objectives of Pruning

- Remove dead, injured or diseased branches
- Remove crossing/ rubbing branches
- Develop one dominant, central trunk with uniform branching throughout canopy
- Provide clearance for vehicles in roadways and pedestrians on sidewalks
- Reduce the weight of branches or stems with bark inclusions
- Thin the canopy

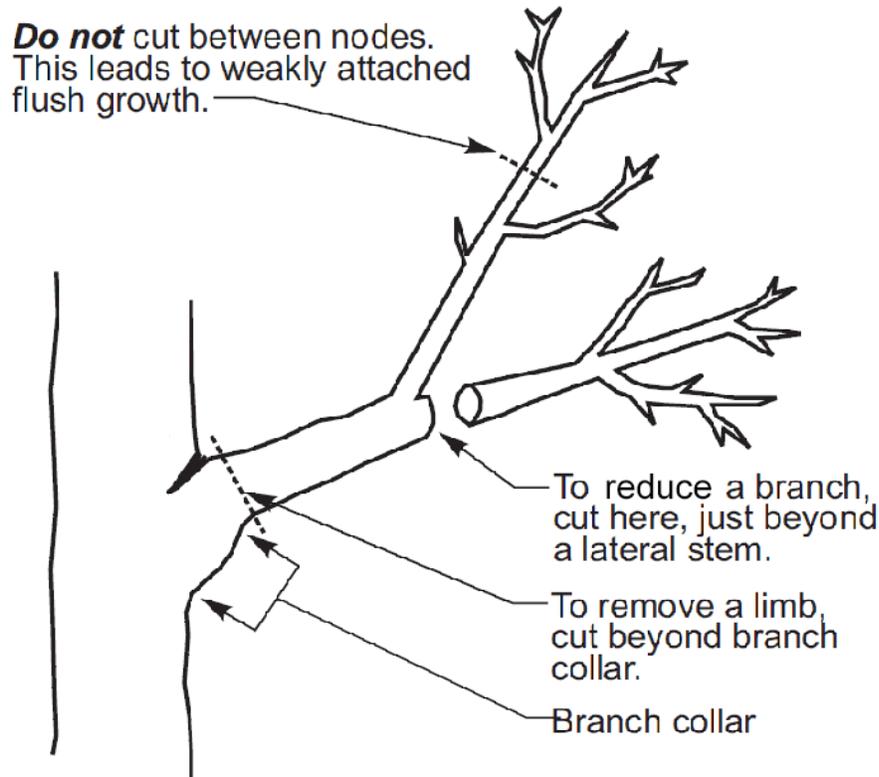
[All pruning cuts](#) shall conform to City Codes and the [ANSI-A300](#) standards.

Proper Pruning

In order to make proper pruning cuts it is important to be familiar with the areas known as the branch bark ridge and the branch collar.

- Branch bark ridge – the raised area located at the connection where two branches meet
- Branch collar – the swollen area just below the attachment where two branches meet

All cuts should be made on a slight angle just beyond the branch bark ridge and outside of the branch collar. This area provides a natural protection zone where the wound calluses over and seals off decay.



How to Remove a Tree Branch or Limb

Some Pruning Guidelines

A young tree properly pruned to maintain its health and structure will not require major annual pruning when mature. Properly pruned trees, placed in the right locations around your home, can help protect your house from windstorms. An *improperly* pruned tree is more likely to fail in a significant weather event.

- Pruning should take place throughout the entirety of the crown of the tree, not just in the bottom branches.
- Maintain the interior limbs of a shade tree; they increase the stability of a tree.

Improper Pruning

Care should be made at all times to minimize hazards and devise a pruning plan that will encourage a strong structure throughout the tree's canopy. Improper pruning cuts can weaken your tree and may result in a code violation. Below are some examples of improper pruning practices.

- Flush cut – cutting into the branch bark ridge and inside the branch collar
- Stub cut – an cut made between two nodes where branches do not meet
- Topping or Hatracking – heading cuts that shorten limbs or branches back to a predetermined point in the canopy
- Over-thinning – the removal of an excessive number of inner, lateral branches from parent branches
- Lions-tailing – the removal of an excessive amount of branches in the interior portion of the canopy, leaving the majority of leaves out toward the ends of the branches, resulting in an uneven distribution of foliage
- Over-lifting – the removal of an excessive number of branches in the lower portion of the tree



Remember: If you hire a tree trimming company, they must possess, at a minimum, a Broward County Tree Trimmers License. At least one trained individual must be on site at all times. To verify a licensed professional, contact the City of Coconut Creek.

Pruning Palms

Palms do not need much pruning; whenever possible, only remove dead fronds, flower stalks and seedpods.

Palms manufacture their own food in the green leaf parts. Every green frond that remains on the palm provides the palm with the ability to produce food. It also enables the production of food for future storage during times of stress - e.g. cold; drought.

Over pruning leads to weakened palms and, in some instances, may even result in death.

For more information on pruning:

- [Proper pruning in Broward County](#)
- [International Society of Arboriculture](#)
- [University of FL – IFAS](#)

Too Much **Just Right**

