

Pruning Young Trees vs. Mature Trees

Young Tree Pruning

Training is a type of pruning for young trees to develop proper structure and branching patterns. Trees that have been “trained” have a lower potential for structural failure and require less future maintenance. A larger percentage of live tissue can be removed on young trees than mature trees.

Mature Tree Pruning

Many factors must be considered when pruning mature trees such as:

- Site conditions
- Timing
- Species
- Size & age
- Growth form
- Health

Mature trees are less tolerant of severe pruning than young trees. The amount of live tissue removed will vary depending on size, age, tree species, and pruning objective, but should be kept to a minimum whenever possible.

As trees get larger and older, they have less stored energy to close wounds and to defend decay. The pruning of large, mature trees should generally be limited to the removal of dead branches and to reduce risk.



Pruning Timing

The best time to prune a tree will vary based upon tree species and pruning objectives.

Flowering can be increased or decreased by pruning at certain times of the year.

As a general rule, the dormant season is the best time to prune. Why?

- Minimizes the risk of insect pest issues
- No threat of diseases such as oak wilt
- A tree's stored energy is at its highest
- Easier to inspect a tree's crown for structural issues

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