

Basic Tree and Shrub Pruning

Tree Pruning:

What to prune:

- Diseased, dead or dying branches
- Branches that are crossing or rubbing another branch
- Branches that are too low

Where to make the pruning cut:

- Before making a cut identify **the branch bark ridge and the branch collar** (see diagrams)
- The cut should be angled and slightly in front of the branch collar (see diagram)
 - This is a natural growing and healing point on the tree and is (in human terms of injury) like a superficial wound that most often the tree can easily heal
 - Cutting into the trunk past the ridge and collar is (in human terms of injury) more like a major wound taking a long time to heal and can introduce diseases, rot and insect infestations into the vascular system and tissues of the tree which can cause great harm and even death
- If branches are large and heavy it is best to make one or two cuts farther up the branch before making the final cut at the branch collar (see diagram)
 - Relieves the weight of the branch on you, the tree and your pruners
 - Reduces the chance of the bark/branch tearing

Shrub Pruning:

What to prune:

- Diseased, dead or dying branches
- Branches that are crossing or rubbing
- Tall, lanky branches that have grown above the rest of the branches
- A shrub with lots of dead branches –rejuvenation pruning
- To encourage lateral branching for a fuller look and regain the original shape

Where to make the pruning cut:

- Most branches can be cut completely off slightly before the base (you may or may not see a visible branch collar or ridge). Do not cut into the base (see above in tree pruning).
- To encourage lateral branching and shape
 - Make cuts farther down each stem (to the desired length) at a lateral branching (another branch on the same stem) or if there is no lateral branching back to a leaf set on the stem
 - Δ These areas are the natural growing and healing points
 - Δ The leaves and/or branches right below the cut will grow out laterally (to the sides giving the shrub a fuller shapelier look) rather than upward.
- To rejuvenate a shrub that is growing poorly and has lots of dead branches
 - Starting with the branches in the middle, cut a third of the old branches down to the base each year for three years