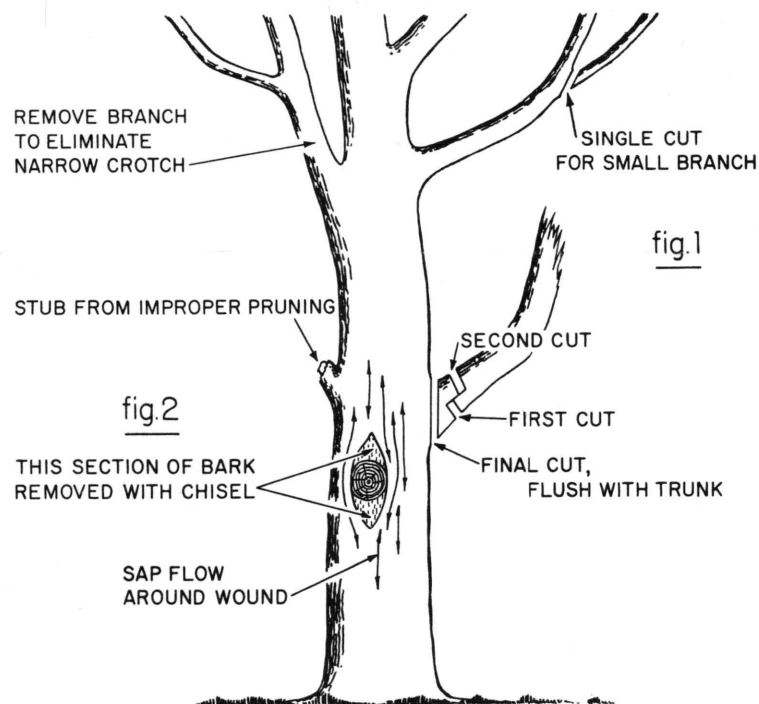


# Pruning Ornamental Trees

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Ornamental trees may need pruning to improve their appearance, to remove dead or diseased wood, or to remove branches that may be injurious to people or property. Low growing limbs that reach out over walkways, streets, or against buildings need to be removed.

## When to Prune

Pruning stimulates growth. Wounds made in pruning heal rapidly if made in the early part of the growing season.

Early spring pruning is, therefore, to be recommended in most cases. If pruning is done at other times, avoid freezing weather. Spring flowering trees are usually pruned immediately after flowering.

## Pruning Equipment

Hand shears with 20-inch handles are very useful for the smaller limbs within reach from the ground or from a ladder. The hand pruning saw, with about 6 teeth to the inch, is a very useful piece of equipment for cutting larger limbs. It can be used in the hand or on a long pole. For very large limbs a cross cut saw or power equipment is needed.

## How to Prune

Make all cuts clean and flush with the remaining portion of the tree. Never leave a stub where decay may start or where it will make an unsightly blemish on the tree. See figure 1 for methods of removing branches. Large branches are undercut  $\frac{1}{3}$  way through to avoid tearing the bark. This cut can be made 6 to 12 inches from the place where the final cut is to be made. Next, saw through from the top of the branch about 2 inches beyond the undercut. The branch will then break off clean, and the final cut can be made flush with the tree or larger limb.

If you are doing much pruning, it would be well to start at the top of the tree so lodged limbs can be removed as the work progresses.

## Shaping Cuts

Pruning cuts heal much faster if the wound is clean cut. An almond-shaped cut around a limb aids in the flow of sap and in the healing process. A sharp knife or wood chisel is useful in making this cut through the bark. See figure 2.



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## **Dressing Wounds**

When the wound is dry, some kind of a dressing should be applied to help prevent excessive drying, decay, and entrance of insects.

Asphalt paint or orange shellac are commonly used for this purpose. Most paint stores and supply houses have something along this line. It may take more than one coat to keep the wound covered until completely healed.

## **Working Carefully**

1. Keep tools in good condition.
2. Handle tools carefully—they are sharp.
3. Remember that trees are very slippery.
4. Use extreme care if electric lines pass through the tree.
5. In climbing, watch out for weak limbs.
6. Be on the watch for loose branches.