

TREE PRUNING GUIDE

Woody plants need trims to stay healthy and attractive, but knowing how and when is crucial. This convenient guide to pruning and trimming will help you save money on your landscape and enjoy more flowers and fruit on your trees.

Learn how, when, and how much to trim or prune your trees to maximize their health and beauty. This guide covers the factors that go into tree trimming (pruning) and will help you make a more informed decision about hiring a professional tree service.

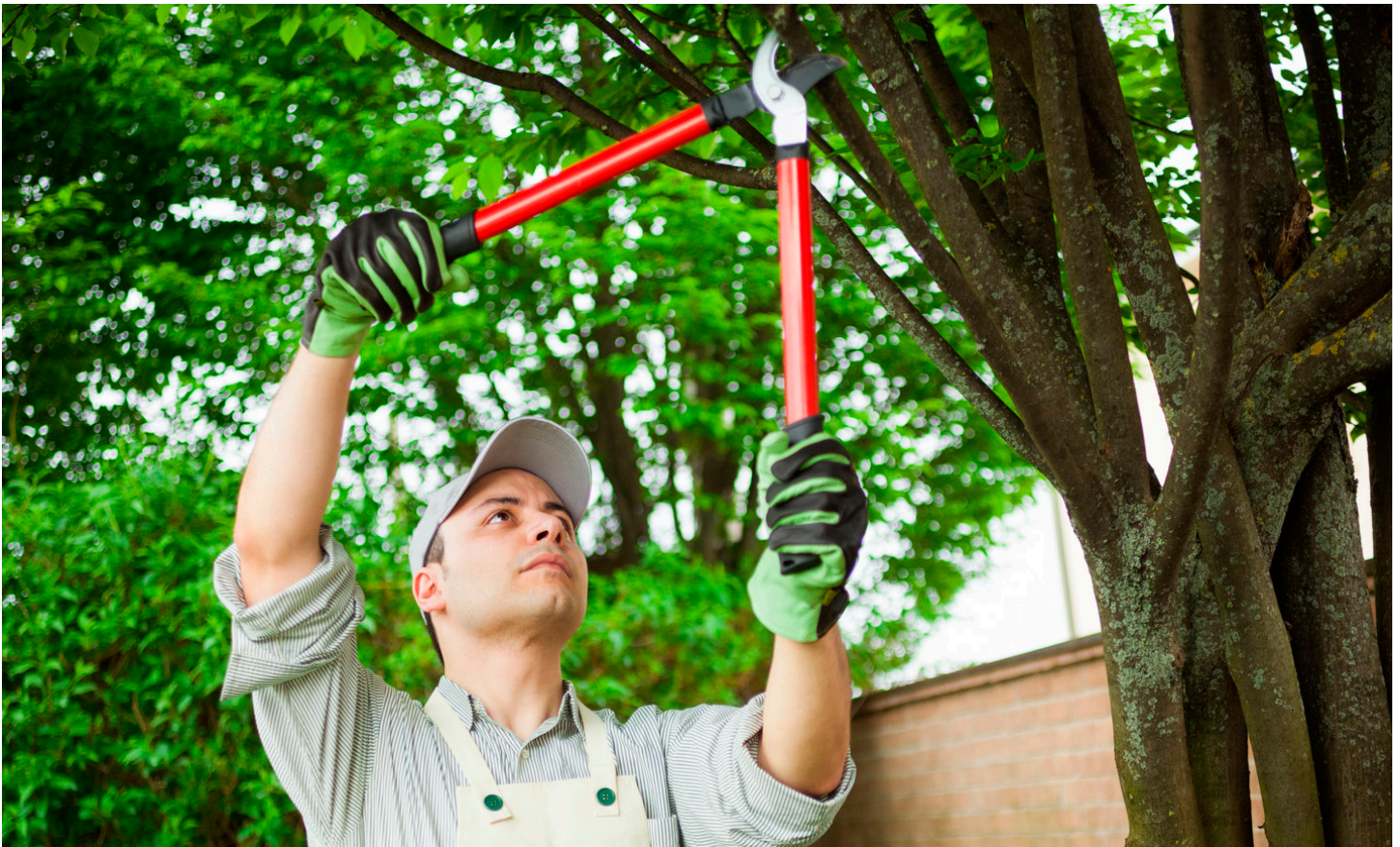
Trees are typically trimmed for one of three reasons: aesthetics, safety or health.

- **Aesthetics** – Pruning a tree effectively helps to maintain its shape and appearance. A well-timed trim can improve the flowering and beauty of a tree. However, abstain from going Ed Scissorhands on your landscape and imposing an unnatural shape or size on your tree. The amount of trimming and pruning that will be needed could seriously damage it.
- **Safety** – Dead or broken branches and limbs can fall off at any time, creating a serious safety hazard. If the branches of a tree obstruct line of sight for drivers or pedestrians, they should be trimmed away. Tree limbs and branches that are growing too close to utility lines should be cut back as well.
- **Health** – Pruning can be a way to maintain the health of the tree and that of the surrounding landscape. Broken branches can be an entry point for disease, so prune them promptly, even if the tree is otherwise healthy. You can sometimes save a sick tree by strategically pruning away affected branches and limbs. Thinning the crown of a tree improves airflow, which can benefit the tree. And if branches are crossing or rubbing together, they should be trimmed so that they don't fall unexpectedly.



Six Tips for Trimming Trees the Right Way

- 1. Perfect your timing.** Light trimming or pruning is good for the tree, provided that you do it at an appropriate time of year. Don't prune in the fall. You will essentially "wake up" the tree right before the frost and stimulate unwanted growth. It's almost always best to trim or prune a tree during its dormant season. Mid-winter through early spring is typically a safe window of time to prune. The only exception is when an urgent hazard exists.
- 2. Be thoughtful** about the size of the branch that you intend to remove. If it is less than five centimeters in diameter, go ahead and remove it. If it is between five and 10 centimeters in diameter, think twice about lopping it off. If the branch is more than 10 centimeters in diameter, don't remove it unless you have a really good reason.
- 3. Cull the weak.** Prune branches that have weak, V-shaped, narrow angles. Preserve larger, established branches that have strong, U-shaped angles.
- 4. Keep plant at a natural height and width.** Lateral branches should be between one-half and three-quarters the diameter of the stem at point of attachment. Otherwise, they should be removed. When pruning is complete, the ratio of living crown to tree height should be two-thirds.
- 5. Prune branches early on.** Smaller, young branches are much easier to manage, and the risk of leaving ugly scars is considerably lower.
- 6. Never trim a branch too close or too long.** You shouldn't leave a large stub or remove the branch collar.



About Elite Tree Care

Elite Tree Care, LLC is family owned and operated. A close-knit team of professional members of the International Society of Arboriculture, PA Certified and Licensed Applicators and with over 30 years of experience, Elite Tree Care has grown into one of the most well-respected tree care services in the Southeast Pennsylvania Region.

At Elite we are committed to continuing education and state of the art equipment to provide expert care for the trees and shrubs on your property. Guided by the belief that good service means respect for the customer as well as the tree, Elite Tree Care is a client-focused company striving to provide excellent service and develop long-term relationships within the community.

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