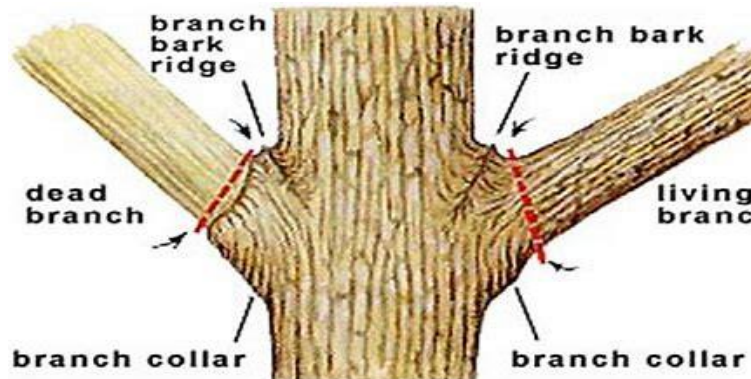




Pruning Outline

We provide a wide variety of pruning options. How you prune depends on a variety of factors. The health of the plant, the type of plant, the time of year, how much can be removed, and how formal the objective.

Another extremely important thing to consider is how the pruning cuts are made. A major piece of being a good pruner is making the proper wounds so the plant has the best chance to close the wound.



Our arborists take all this complex information into consideration when they consult with you to make a plan. Pruning options range from very simple to somewhat complex. Because every action will have a reaction from the plant, we need to carefully consider all of these factors. Below are some of our most common types of pruning but not the only types of pruning we offer.

Dead Wood: One of the most basic types of pruning. Removing dead and broken limbs helps the plant to look cleaner, close the dead area as the tree grows, and for larger trees, makes it safer.

Structure Prune: Pruning trees to improve the architecture to reduce the risk of storm damage. This usually entails shortening of large branches to reduce weight. It also includes eliminating or reducing structural defects.

Fine Prune: This is usually done to important ornamental trees in the landscape. It is one of the more formal types of pruning where the tree is shaped and all dead is removed. The tree species usually dictates how the plant is to be shaped.

Training Pruning: Training pruning is for young trees but most importantly for medium to large tree species. The idea is to prune the trees to promote the best long-term structure by removing structural defects at a young age when the trees are small. Often times, we see trees that have been growing well and look very healthy only to fail due to a bad branch attachment. This is the most common type of storm damage. Pruning your young trees abates the risk of this devastating damage.

Rejuvenation Pruning: In New England, this is specific to certain types of shrubs. For example; forsythia, lilac, privet, mountain laurel, inkberry and a few others. This is very timing specific and is to be done in March or early April. The idea is to cut down the older larger stalks to 1-2 inches stubs above the ground to encourage sprouting. (This is the only time when leaving stubs is OK.) By doing this work in the late winter and early spring you capture all the energy of the new growth. In most cases it is good to cut down a few larger stalks to the ground each year. The goal is to have an equal mix of smaller shoots, medium sized branches, and larger stems. However, you can also cut down entire large shrubs or hedge rows completely.

Hand Pruning of Shrubs: The same principles listed in the pruning decision process apply to shrub pruning, obviously it's on a smaller scale. The key is to use bypass pruners so you can make proper collar cuts (please see the image above). It takes time but it allows you to make pruning cuts at varying depths to encourage interior growth. It also leaves the shrub with a natural appearance and interior growth to cut back to in the future. Shearing of shrubs cuts indiscriminately leaving stubs and tears. Shearing also only stimulates growth on the outer few inches. After several years of shearing, you have large unnatural shaped plants with no interior growth.

All pruning options should be discussed to be sure you know what the results will be. Again, coming up with the right plan for your trees and shrubs requires discussing a number of factors.

The condition of your plants. If a plant is weak, pruning can cause more harm than good.

The time of year. You generally want to prune plants aggressively in the late winter/ early spring. Avoid pruning in the summer, fall, or the dead of winter.

Species. Knowing the specific plant and how it likes to be pruned is the most difficult. This takes a strong, working knowledge of plant identification and pruning experience.

How much foliage to remove? Some plants respond to aggressive pruning better than others but the timing is critical. More plants are damaged by over pruning than by not pruning at all.

When pruning, there is a lot to think about so leave it to the experts at Mayer Tree Service. We will work with you to develop the correct plan specific for your plants.

David M. Anderson

Mayer Tree Service

978-880-0803

davida@mayertree.com

mayertree.com