

Caring for Your New Tree



*A Guide to Keeping Your New
Tree Happy and Healthy*

Tree Care Basics

WATER

A lack of sufficient water will kill your tree. Water your tree the day it is planted and continue watering for the first two years. Slow, deep watering will encourage root growth. Set your hose on a trickle for 20 minutes or fill a 20-gallon watering bag once a week in spring, summer and fall. Can't tell if your tree needs watering? Poke an 8" long screwdriver into the ground. It will go easily into the ground if the soil is moist, but it will be difficult to push into dry soil.

MULCH

Mulch retains moisture, prevents weed growth, and helps nourish trees. Mulch your tree each spring and fall.

PRUNE

Proper pruning keeps your tree healthy and prevents future tree hazards. Prune dead, damaged or diseased limbs any time of year. Winter is the best time to prune for aesthetics.

WEED

Pull weeds from around your tree. Weeds compete with the tree for soil nutrients and water. Weeds also make tree pits look messy, and they can collect trash.

PROTECT

Remove trash, animal droppings, and debris from your tree pit. Do not nail or staple into the bark of your tree. If you put decorations, including lights, on your tree, please remove them each year.



Proper Mulching

Mulch is made of shredded wood and is one of the best and most inexpensive things you can do for your tree! Mulch should be spread in a **3" thick layer** over your entire tree pit, staying 3" away from the trunk of your tree. **Please do NOT allow any mulch to touch the trunk**, as it can rot the base of the tree. This organic material will decompose over time, so it is important to reapply mulch twice a year. We recommend mulching in the spring and fall.



BENEFITS OF USING MULCH:

- Helps retain soil moisture (important in the summer)
- Suppresses weed growth
- Beautifies your tree pit
- Improves fertility and nutrients of the soil

NOTE: Mulch is a great alternative to fertilizer.

Fertilizer should NOT be used on young trees, as it can burn and damage the roots.

Young Tree Pruning

Proper young tree pruning helps prevent future hazards. Here's what you need to know!

When should I prune my tree?

Dead, damaged, diseased, and decaying branches (known as the "4D's") can be removed anytime, along with sprouts (Right; Figure 1) and any pedestrian hazards that occur.

Pruning the lower limbs on your tree, removing crossing or parallel limbs, and general aesthetic pruning should only be done in the winter when your tree is dormant and not using its leaves to make food.

When removing a branch, where should I cut?

Pruning should be done at the branch collar (Right; Figure 2A), which allows your tree to seal over this new wound. Cuts made in the wrong locations can encourage improper growth and weaken your tree.

What are "sprouts" and how do I remove them?

Sprouts grow from the base of your tree and indicate stress. If you see them, remove them right away (they can get very large) and refer to the "Tree Care Basics" on page 2 of this booklet. Your tree may need more water or mulch. Applying compost to your tree pit can also help.

Are there any other essential tips for pruning?

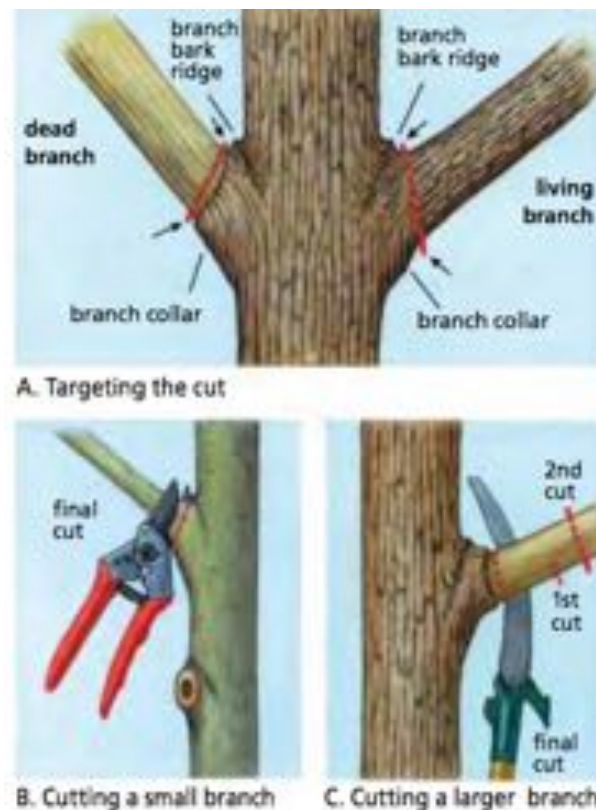
Keep your tree's original form, and do not use pruning to change the shape of your tree. Do not top your tree or cut it on its sides. Also, never remove more than 1/4 of your tree's branches when pruning.

Do not attempt to prune mature, large trees yourself. Stick to young tree pruning!



Figure 1 (Above): Sprouts
Figure 2* (Right): Pruning Cuts

**Image provided by the USDA Forest Service*



PROPER PRUNING TOOLS

- **Bypass hand pruners:** Use these for your smallest branches/twigs (Figure 2B)
- **Pruning folding saw:** When your hand pruners won't cut it, use the saw. It can cut branches that are several inches thick if kept clean and sharp (Figure 2C).
- **Loppers/Pole Pruners:** These tools are great for hard-to-reach branches!
- **Gloves:** Safety first! Be sure to keep your fingers away when pruning.

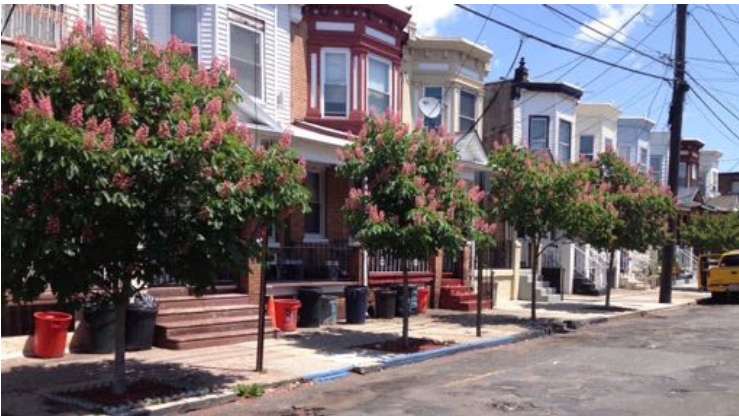
Questions about pruning? Visit the "Contact Us" page of www.njtreefoundation.org to find a NJTF staff member near you.

Benefits of Trees

- Trees provide oxygen and help purify our air.
- Tree roots naturally filter water and remove contaminants.
- Trees reduce street flooding and combined sewer overflows.
- Well-maintained trees increase property values by 5-17%.
- Trees and green spaces reduce crime and stress levels.
- Trees provide shade and keep us cool in the summer, combating the Urban Heat Island Effect.

Your Tree's Connection to Your Watershed

Trees are essential to the well-being of our local watersheds. Trees planted along waterways prevent harmful soil erosion and help filter pollution that threatens the quality of our local waterways and drinking supply. Trees planted along city streets take it a step further by slowing and storing stormwater runoff that may otherwise cause flooding or combined sewer overflows. Tree pits allow rain to seep into the ground as it naturally should. This reduces localized flooding along streets, parks, and in basements and reduces the amount of water burdening the city's sewer system in storm events.



Street trees planted in Camden by the NJ Tree Foundation infiltrate and filter stormwater.

Resources



Decorate your tree pit with fencing, decorations, and flowers. Make it your own! Just be sure to water a little extra if you plant in your tree pit, and do NOT mound dirt or mulch against the trunk of your tree if you build a tree box. Looking for inspiration? Search #TreePitTuesday on Instagram.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is in NJ and will kill the ash trees in your community. If you notice D-shaped exit holes (right) or suspect EAB is affecting your ash trees, please report it to the Department of Agriculture by calling (609) 409-6939.



Having trouble with your tree? **Hire a NJ Certified Tree Expert** by calling (732) 833-0325 or emailing njtreeexperts@gmail.com.



About the NJ Tree Foundation

The NJ Tree Foundation is a state-wide nonprofit organization dedicated to planting trees in NJ's most urban communities. For more information, please visit us online at www.njtreefoundation.org.



Connect with Us

Stay up-to-date on the latest news by following us on social media. Love your tree? We want to see it! Post your beautiful tree pictures and tag us for a chance to be featured on our pages.



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This tree care booklet was made possible with support from The Watershed Institute, a program of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. Their Watershed Center in Pennington, NJ is open to the public! For more information, visit www.thewatershedinstitute.org.

