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). Sprouts may be an indicator that your tree may need more water or mulch. Applying compost to your tree pit can also help.

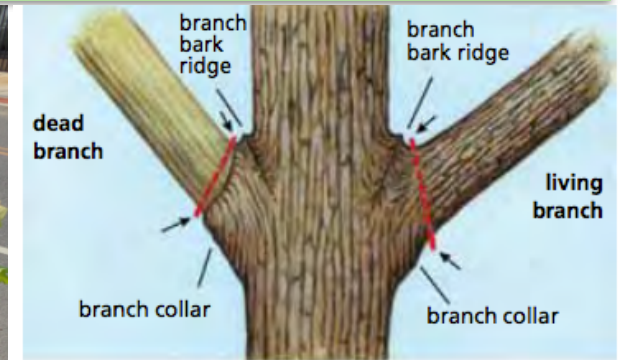## Are there any other essential tips for pruning?

- **Keep your tree's original form**
- **Do not top your tree** or cut it on its sides.
- **Never remove more than 1/4 of your tree's branches**

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

Figure 1 (Above): Sprouts
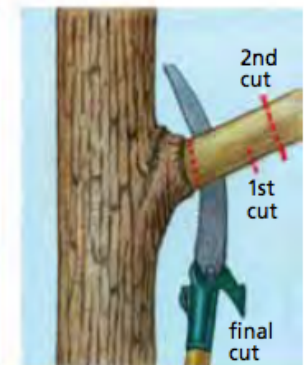*Figure 2* (Right): Pruning Cuts*
Image provided by the USDA Forest Service

A. Targeting the cut

B. Cutting a small branch

C. Cutting a larger branch

PROPER PRUNING TOOLS

- <u>Bypass hand pruners:</u> Use these for your smallest branches/twigs (Figure 2B)
- <u>Pruning folding saw</u>: 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).
- <u>Loppers/Pole Pruners:</u> These tools are great for hard-to-reach branches!
- <u>Gloves</u>: Safety first! Be sure to keep your fingers away when pruning.

For more pruning information, *visit our website at* www.njtreefoundation.org *or Contact Elena at* **elopez@njtreefoundation.org** *or (609) 439-1755.*