

# The Mavis Institute

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## PRUNING

### Why Prune

There are several basic reasons to prune an ornamental.

- The "three 'D's" - Dead, Diseased, and Damaged branches. These types of branches should be cut out whenever you see them.
- Size Control - Many plants may have simply gotten too large for the intended space. They may even create a safety hazard, interfering with views, lighting, or access. You may need to consider replacing the plant with something of a more appropriate size.
- Aesthetics - Some plants are being grown for a particular shape or form. This is often a matter of personal taste.
- Plant Health - Pruning allows more light and air to circulate in the canopy, which can reduce insect and disease problems.
- Flowering - For certain shrubs, selective cuts can be made to promote flowering



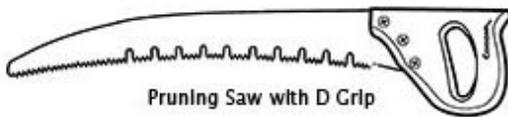
### Common Pruning Tools



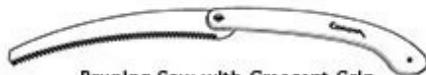
Draw Cut or Scissor-Action Pruners



Lopping Shears



Pruning Saw with D Grip



Pruning Saw with Crescent Grip

### PRUNING TOOLS

There are a few pruning tools which all home gardeners and landscape professionals should have.

- Two pairs of hand pruners, one anvil style, the other by-pass (scissor).
- A pair of loppers with the ability to cut 1-2" branches.
- A pruning saw or bow saw.

Tools should be kept sharp and rust free.

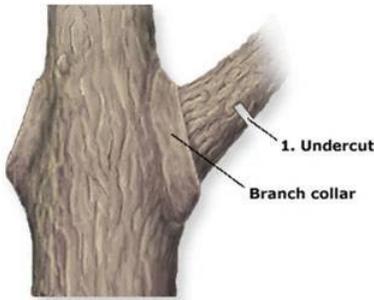
Use standard solvents to clean the blades. The scissor/by-pass style hand pruners allow you to make a very close cut, while the anvil-style can cut a slightly larger branch. If you are trimming rose bushes or fruit trees, disinfect the blades with alcohol, between pruning. The bow saw is a safe way to trim larger branches.

If power-trimming equipment is used for the hedges. Most of the blades can handle up to one-half inch stems and still make a smooth, clean cut. Save these larger stems and branches for the loppers.



## Pruning a Large Limb

**1** Undercut 12-24" up from the branch collar. This stops the bark from tearing.



**2** Make the second cut from the top all the way through the branch, 2-3" above cut #1.

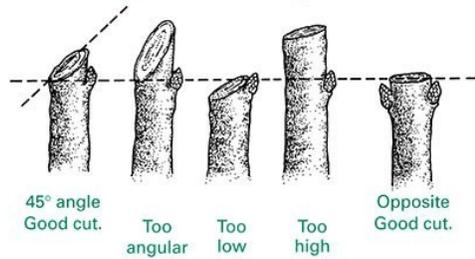


**3** The final cut should be just beyond the branch collar. Support the stub so it does not tear the bark.

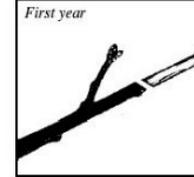
**3. Final cut**

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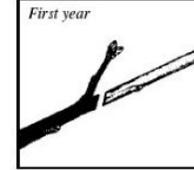
## Pruning cuts in relationship to stem buds



### Heading cut



### Thinning cut



Heading and thinning cuts

The branch collar is a distinctive bulge at the base of the branch, where it connects to the trunk. It is actually interlocking layers of cells of the branch and the trunk, and is the part that will heal the wound left by pruning. The branch collar seals off the wound, minimizing disease and decay. Proper pruning leaves the branch collar intact. Branch collars vary widely from tree to tree, and from species to species. Some are large and very noticeable, while some are much harder to distinguish.

The branch bark ridge is slightly raised bark between the branch and the trunk that extends in a line to each side of the trunk. When the branch collar is difficult to identify, the branch bark ridge can help us decide where to make our pruning cut. When you are pruning, never cut behind the branch bark ridge.



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