



Corrective pruning

Early identification and elimination is vital to long term tree health.

Corrective pruning is pruning carried out on a young tree to improve its long-term form. This will help to develop a strong trunk and branch structure, avoiding problems of trunk and branch breakage, and the need to remove large limbs as the tree matures.

It is important to note that selecting the right tree for the site will influence the amount and type of corrective pruning that may be required. The 3D rule is a good basic guide - if you eliminate all dead, diseased and damaged material first, then stand back and look at the tree, you'll often find little else needs doing.

One major fault that does necessitate further corrective pruning is double leaders, or co-dominant multiple stems. These are usually a genetic structural flaw known as included forks. Included forks occur where two or more stems or branches arise from an excessively tight fork. Although they rarely cause problems in young trees, they almost always result in major limb or stem failures in mature trees. This is because the tight fork union causes bark and cambial tissues to become constricted within the union. As the branches or stems increase in diameter with growth, the stems literally force themselves apart.

Reference Book: 'A New Tree Biology' by Dr Alex Shigo is an excellent text that explains the physiological processes that take place within trees and how they respond to injury and disease.



Multiple stem



Completed cut and a well healed cut made two years ago

*Correct pruning is about making
the right cuts with the right tools.*

CORRECT PRUNING TECHNIQUE AND TARGET PRUNING

Tree damage is extremely hard to repair, but very simple to prevent. Good advice and appropriate professional tree care given in the formative years can prevent costly, remedial work in the future, and more importantly, can ensure the trees are enjoyed by generations to come.



TOOLS

Hand secateurs and pruning loppers with curved blades make a cleaner cut with less

crushing of the surrounding stem tissue.

The Silky range of hand and pole saws has a unique tooth pattern to give a fast and efficient cutting action, which produces a smooth cut surface. Pole saws with multiple adjustment extension poles allow a reach up of up to 3.3 metres. Available from Fruitfed Supplies.

TARGET PRUNING This is about identification of the branch collars and making the correct cuts in the right place, to encourage compartmentalisation of the wound and rapid callous formation.

REMOVAL CUTS Branches larger than 50mm should be cut in three steps to avoid splitting back of the branch and tearing the bark.

The first cut should be made on the underside of the branch 300-500mm from the crotch. Cut the branch about 25% of the way up or until the saw binds. Begin the next cut on top of the limb within 25-50mm of the first cut and saw until the limb falls. The final cut should be made close to, but beyond the bark ridges and the collar at the base of the branch. Avoid flush cuts as they increase the diameter of cut and increase the area of trunk tissue exposed to decay.

HEADING BACK CUTS Heading cuts are made to shorten a branch or central leader back to a bud. These are typically used to reduce the vigour and promote growth in the tree, other than the part that has been pruned back.

Tubex tree shelters and overly staked trees tend to promote very strong dominant leaders, which then tend to bend over. By cutting back to a bud below the bend, stem diameter is increased and a more balanced branch structure develops.

By choosing a downward or outward facing bud from the trunk, a more horizontal branch habit will develop.

