



## Pruning for the Pragmatic

### Creating an Objective

The first order of business with regards to pruning is without a doubt to "Create a Pruning Objective". Some of the most common objectives are listed as examples below.

**To improve structure/health** : Improve health by establishing a structural pruning program to young trees 15' or less on the property. Often times these trees are overlooked in the landscape but, how often have you encountered a problem that could have been avoided if it would have been addressed 20 years ago. Young trees are like children. This is the optimal window of opportunity to influence their development at maturity. Structural pruning of young trees is the best way to ensure and improve the serviceable lifespan of trees on your property.

**To provide a view** - A view can be created or enhanced through crown reduction where the edge of the crown at the top of the tree is reduced or by elevation pruning where lower branches of the crown are removed.

**To provide clearance** - Growth can be directed away from buildings lights or parking areas. This is the most commonly request pruning item and will need to be repeated as the tree will grow back to fill the void created by pruning.

**To reduce risk of failure** - Risk of tree failure can be reduced by identifying and rectifying hazard conditions such as included bark, dead or broken branches or large scaffold limbs. Mature trees need to be monitored to manage these risks.

### Types of Pruning

You may have noted several pruning terms listed in the description above. Your proposal should speak in these terms, beware of specs that simply state 'Pruning.' We using the following terms in our proposals as they are recognized tree standards supported by the International Society of Arboriculture and the American National Standards Institute[ANSI].

**Remove Deadwood** - Eliminating deadwood is an essential maintenance practice for trees. Dead limbs exceeding 1" in caliper will be removed in order to eliminate a possible hazard to underlying targets. Appropriate pruning cuts will be performed to allow the tree to compartmentalize the wound from insects or diseases and to prevent future inoculations.

**Crown Clean** - A light pruning of thinning or lateral cuts to selectively remove dead, broken, crossing, injured, co-dominant or diseased branches. This type of pruning is done to reduce the risk of branches falling from the tree and to reduce the movement of decay, insects, and diseases from dead or dying branches into the rest of the tree. It can be performed on trees of any age but, is most commonly practiced on medium aged or mature trees. Dead branches less than 1" in diameter are not included.

**Crown Thinning** - Selective removal of live branches to reduce crown density. Crown Thinning increases the penetration of light through the canopy, increases air flow circulation and reduces wind resistance in the crown.

**Crown Reduction** - Lateral or drop-crotch cuts to reduce the breadth of the canopy or decrease the height and/or breadth of a tree. This type of pruning is done to reduce the risk of structural failure or to prevent encroachment of vegetation into undesirable areas such as nearby buildings, parking lots, lamp posts, utility lines or other structures where clearance is desired.

**Crown Elevation** - Selective removal of branches to provide vertical clearance above walkways, vehicles, signs, streets and vistas.

**Structural Pruning** - Removal of live branches to establish dominant central leader, influence spacing, growth rate, strength of attachment and size of branches. Structural pruning is often performed to young or medium-aged trees to encourage trunk taper and improve branch arrangement in order to increase serviceable lifespan of tree.

When encouraging the healthy growth of your trees and plants it is important for you or your contractor to follow the American National Standards for Pruning (ANSI 300). Read more to see these standards and to get other hints! You should not be confused by the terminology that your contractors use. Be Pragmatic and ask Pointed Questions! Be sure they follow the appropriate terminology and have thoroughly trained staff. Your contractor will know when is the best time to prune each specific plant.

We welcome all calls to your Blade Runners Account Manager should you have any questions!