

Hardwood Pruning



Properly pruned Palo Verde Trees

What do people mean when they say Hardwood Pruning?

Typically, Hardwood Pruning refers to trimming deciduous trees. Evergreen trees are generally considered to be softwood trees. However, sometimes these terms are used interchangeably when referring to pruning. Fast growing hardwood trees will need annual pruning. These trees include but are not limited to, varieties of Mesquites, Palo Verdes, Sumacs, and Acacia Trees. Commonly found desert hardwood trees are Chitalpas, Desert Willows, and Chaste Trees. Pine trees and other softwood trees usually don't need to be pruned more than once every three to five years. Other trees such as Ash, Pistache, Elm, Oak, Mulberry, etc. need to be pruned only when necessary to remove dead limbs, or for clearance purposes.

Why do you Hardwood Prune?

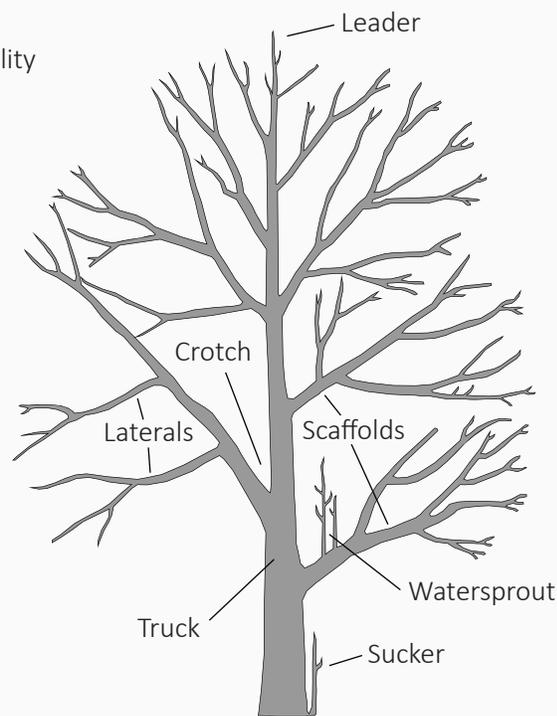
By reducing weight and removing dead limbs, you promote overall structural stability and health. This also promotes healthier growth in the following growth season. Most importantly, proper pruning will allow the wind to move through the canopy, preventing structural failure during a windstorm (broken branches, or downed trees). Additionally, pruning allows the sun light to penetrate the interior of the tree and can help provide light to plants under the tree.

When do you Hardwood Prune?

Fall or Winter is the optimal time to prune trees and shrubs since the plant is dormant and there is less chance for disease and pest damage. The cold weather also helps to minimize the stress the tree goes through during pruning. A good rule of thumb is if you can't see through the tree you may need to consider pruning it.

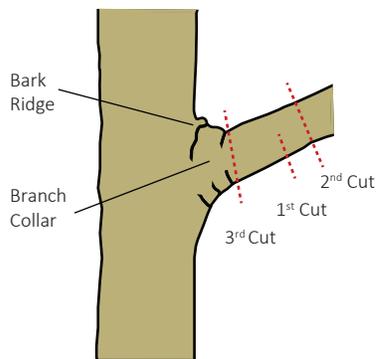
Which limbs do you prune?

- 1) Dead or Dying Limbs: Prevents decay, disease, and pest infestation,
- 2) Rubbing or Crossing Limbs: Prevents weak points in canopy over time,
- 3) Multiple Leaders: to create a canopy structure with one main vertical stem,
- 4) Obtaining Proper Branch Height: Accomplished by removing lower branches,
- 5) Suckers & Watersprouts: These types of growths can waste the trees resources,
- 6) To minimize stress, remove at most 25% of the trees canopy in any one year.



Anatomy of a Tree

Center Cut Proper Pruning Techniques



Undercut Pruning Diagram

- A)** All cuts shall be made sufficiently close to the trunk or parent limb, without cutting into the branch collar or leaving a protruding stub. It is necessary to precut branches too heavy to handle to prevent splitting or peeling the bark. The diagram on the left illustrates an Undercut which eliminates peeling bark & splitting.
- B)** Where necessary, branches shall be lowered to the ground by proper ropes or equipment.

- C)** Treatment of cuts and wounds with tree wound dressing is performed if requested.
- D)** Any structural weakness, disease conditions, decayed trunk or branches, and split crotches will be reported as soon as it is noticed.
- E)** Minimum clearance pruning and elevation are always included with all classes of pruning.
- F)** The diagram on the left illustrates proper pruning techniques used by Center Cut.