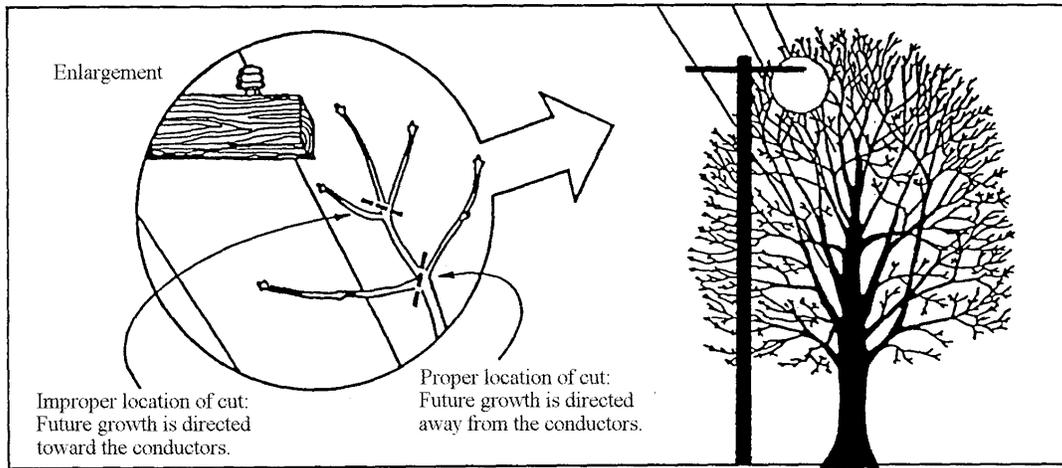


Right of Way Tree Trimming Techniques



Natural Pruning (to direct growth away from wires)

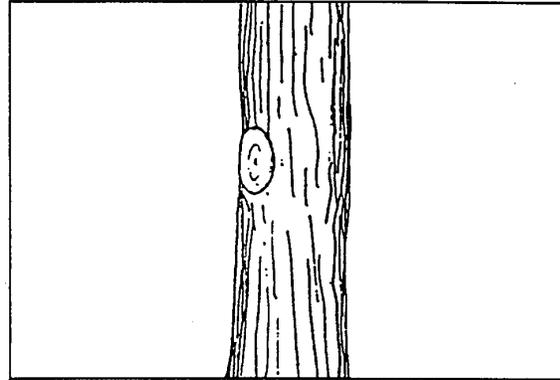
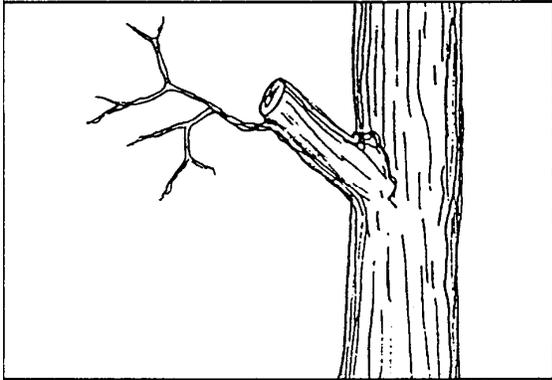
Natural pruning is a method by which branches are cut at a suitable parent limb back toward the center of the tree. The cut should be made as close as possible to the branch collar at the branch base, but the collar should not be injured or removed. Every branch has a branch bark ridge that separates the branch from the main stem. The cut should be made on the outer side of the ridge. If the cut is made on the inner side of the ridge, a trunk wound will result that provides easy entry for microorganisms. This method of pruning is sometimes called “drop-crotching” or “lateral trimming.” Large branches should be removed to laterals at least one-third the diameter of the branch being removed. Natural pruning is especially adapted to the topping of large trees where a great deal of wood must be removed. In natural pruning, almost all cuts are made with a saw, and very little pole pruning works is required. This results in a natural looking tree when finished, even if a large amount of wood has been removed.

Natural pruning is also directional pruning, since it tends to guide the growth of the tree away from the wires. Stubbing or pole-clip clearance, on the other hand, tends to promote rapid sucker growth right back into the conductors. The big factor to remember is that natural pruning does work, and that two or three trimming cycles done in this manner will bring about an ideal situation for both the utility and the tree owner. Most shade trees lend themselves easily to this type of pruning.

Natural pruning techniques should be used for top pruning, side pruning, under pruning, and combinations as described on the following pages.

Natural Pruning Details

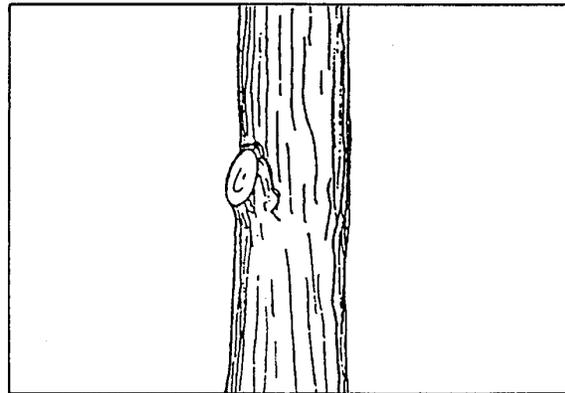
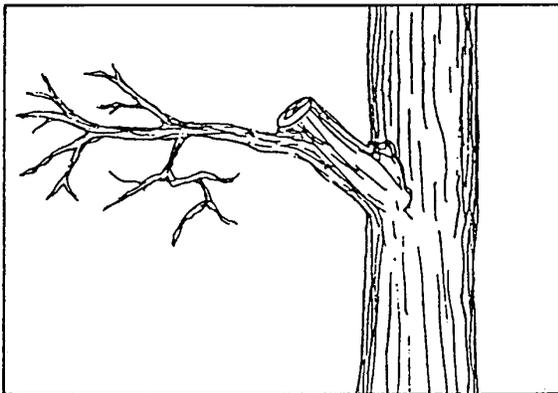
Improper Trimming Techniques

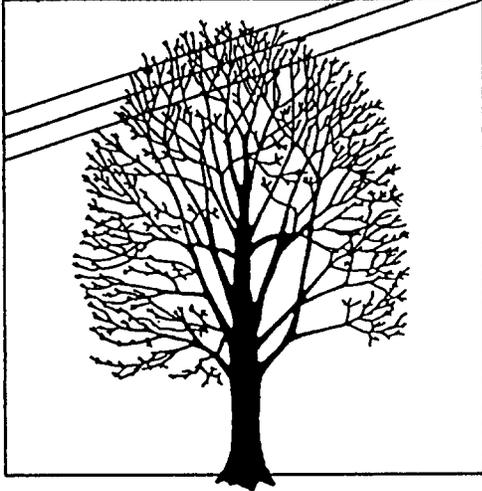


Details of improper trimming and proper natural pruning techniques are shown here. The branch at left above was cut back to a lateral that is too small. Branches should be cut back to a lateral that is at least one-third the size of the branch being removed as shown at left below. If a proper lateral is not available, the branch should be cut back to the trunk.

The cut shown at right above is an improper flush cut where the branch collar was removed. The cut at right below shows the proper method to remove the branch at the trunk, leaving the branch collar but not a stub.

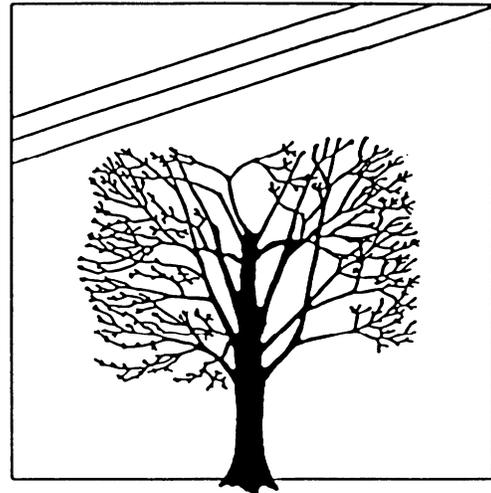
Proper Pruning Techniques





Before Top Pruning

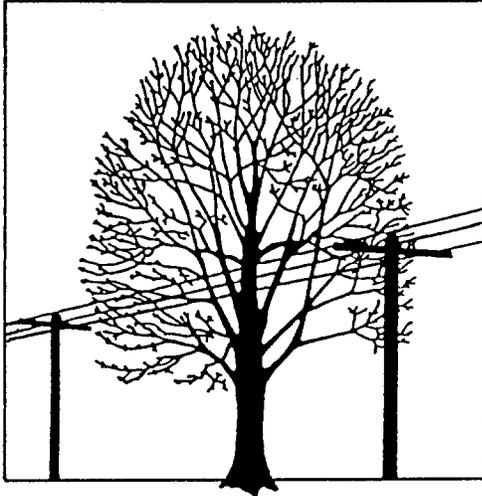
After Top Pruning



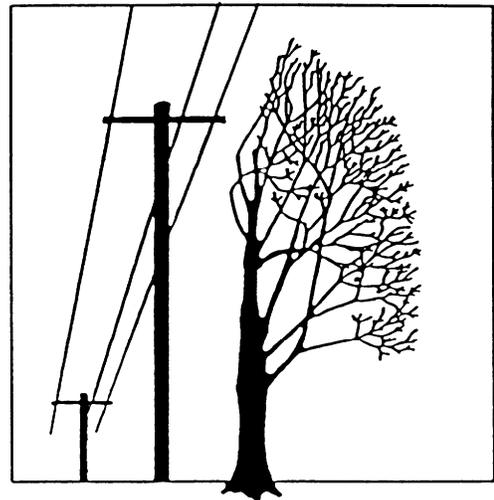
1. TOP PRUNING

Top pruning is cutting back large portions of the upper crown of the tree. Top pruning is often required where a tree is located directly beneath a line. The main leader or leaders are cut back to a suitable lateral. (The lateral should be at least one-third the diameter of the limb being removed.) Most cuts should be made with a saw; the pole pruner is used only to prune some of the high lateral branches.

For the sake of appearance and to limit the amount of regrowth, it is best not to remove more than one-fourth of the crown when top pruning. In certain species, removal of too much of the crown may result in death of the tree.



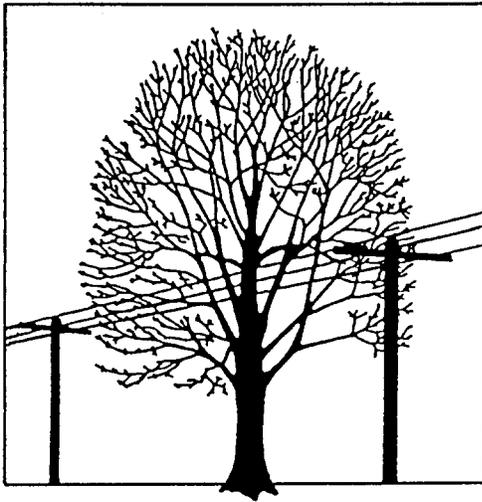
Before Side Pruning



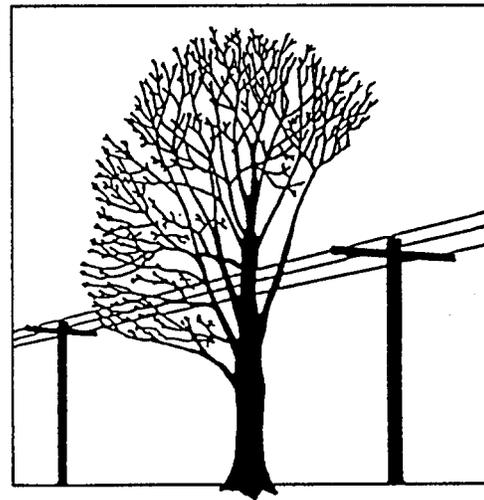
After Side Pruning

2. SIDE PRUNING

Side Pruning consists of cutting back or removing the side branches that are threatening the conductors. Side pruning is required where trees are growing adjacent to utility lines. Limbs should be removed at a lateral branch or the main trunk. All branches beneath the conductors should be removed to prevent them from growing up into the lines. Avoid unsightly notches in the tree, if possible.



Before Under Pruning



After Under Pruning

3. UNDER PRUNING

Under pruning involves removing lower limbs of the tree to allow wires to pass below the tree crown. All cuts should be made as close as possible to the branch collar at the branch base to avoid leaving unsightly stubs. The natural shape of the tree is retained in this type of pruning, and the tree can continue its normal growth. Overhangs are a hazard, however, when a line passes beneath the crown. They should be removed in accordance with the species of tree, location, and general policy of the utility. All dead branches above the wires must be removed, since this dead wood could easily break off and cause an interruption.

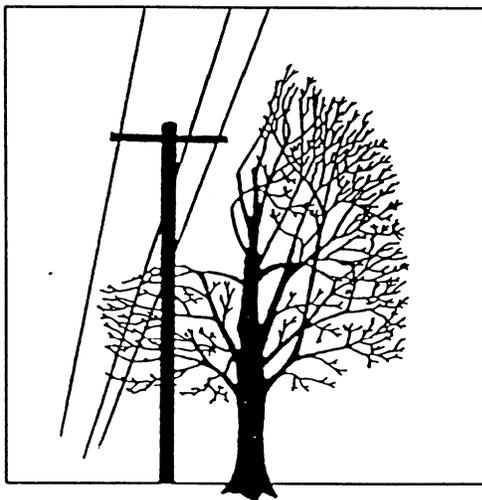
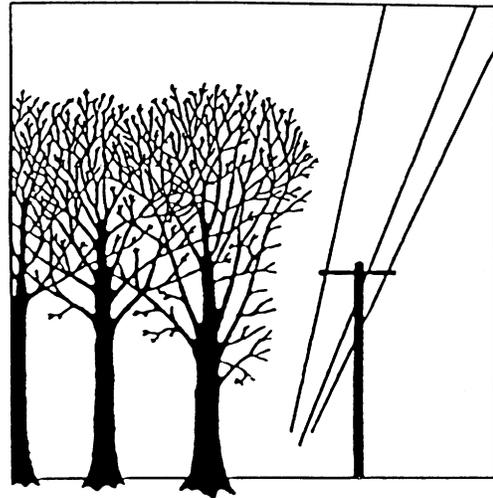
4. COMBINATIONS

It may be necessary to combine several pruning types in order to achieve a good-looking job and to obtain adequate clearances.

Improper Trimming Methods

5. SIDE TRIM STUBBING

This is done by stubbing off portions of limbs along the side of the tree to obtain clearance. Cutting off portions of limbs (leaving stubs) to obtain clearance creates many fast-growing suckers that become a serious line clearance problem.

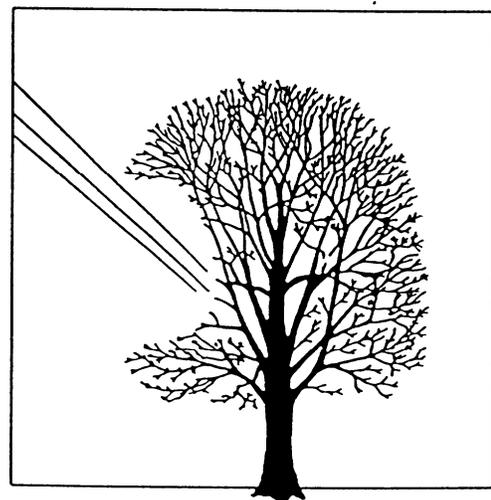


6. SIDE TRIM "SHELF"

Leaving a "shelf" below the conductors when side trimming allows the branches to grow back toward the lines. These branches will require pruning in future cycles; therefore, they should be removed.

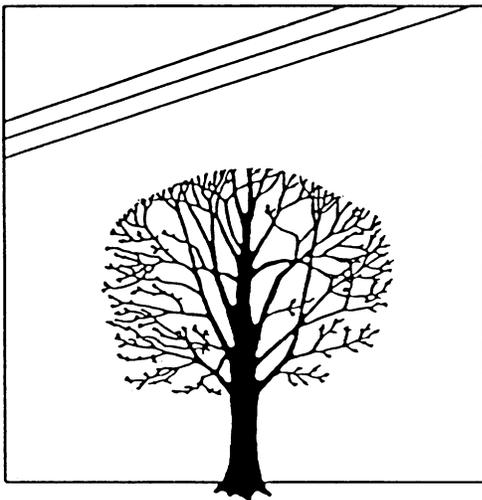
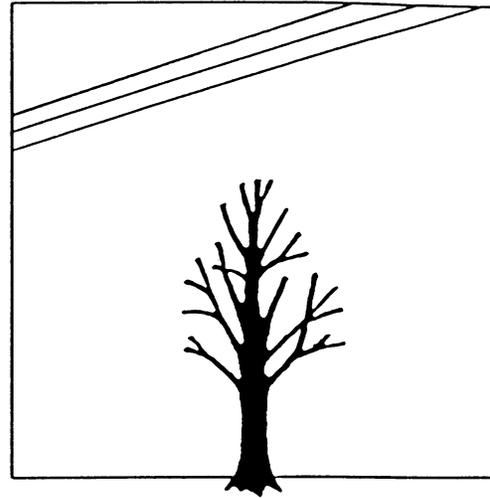
7. "SHAPING" AROUND LINES

This is done by trimming limbs in an arc to obtain clearance. This unsightly method of trimming leaves branches above the conductors that could bend or break, causing outages. Shaping also creates many fast-growing suckers.



8. POLLARDING

This is done by stubbing off major limbs to greatly reduce the size of the tree crown. The result is not only unsightly, but a multitude of fast-growing suckers will sprout from the stubs, resulting in a line clearance problem more serious than before. The stubs also are quite likely to fall victim to decay and disease.



9. ROUNDING OVER

Rounding over (or shearing) is done by making many small cuts so that the tree top is sheared in a uniform line. This creates an unhealthy tree condition and results in rapid regrowth of suckers directly toward the electric conductors.