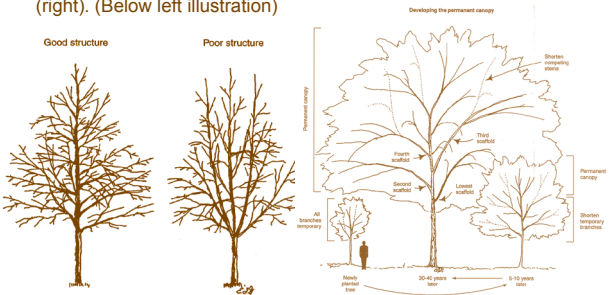


# Tree Pruning Cue Card

Provided by RPG, Florida Chapter ISA & UF/IFAS

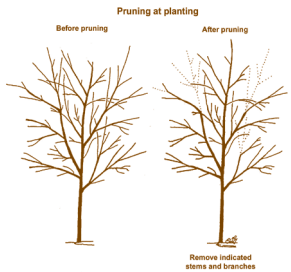
Trees with appropriately pruned crowns and roots become more stable and healthy. Here are some guidelines for executing these practices on young large-maturing shade trees.

- Shade trees that will become large perform best in urban landscapes when grown with one trunk extending 30' or more into the crown. Large limbs should be spaced along this trunk, not clustered together at one point. Newly planted Florida #1 or better nursery trees have one trunk at least half way up the tree (left). Trees with more than one large upright trunk are considered lesser quality and more prone to failure in the landscape (right). (Below left illustration)

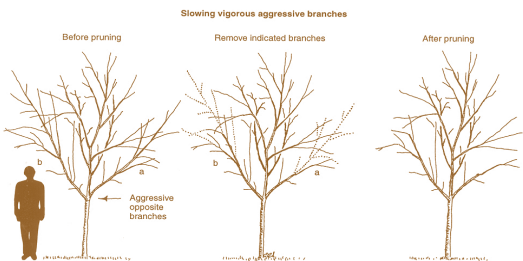


- Trees with competing stems can be pruned so there is one trunk to the top of the crown (left). Pruning in this manner at planting and every few years results in a strong tree with one dominant trunk (center and right). (Above right illustration)

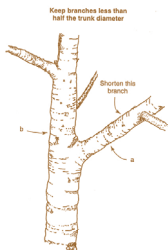
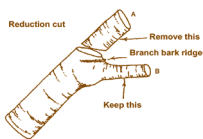
- Removing or shortening competing upright stems back to lateral branches in the top half of the crown will encourage one trunk to dominate. The one trunk in the crown center should be more visible after pruning.



- Shortening all large lower branches when the tree is young also forces more growth into one trunk which makes it strong. Trunk wounds will be small with little resulting decay when these shortened low branches are removed later.

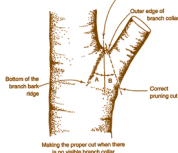
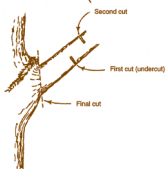


- 5** Reducing large stems and branches back to a live lateral branch slows growth on the pruned stem because foliage was removed. This shifts growth to the leader stem and encourages it to become the dominant trunk. (Below left illustration)



- 6** The branch at the bottom right should be shortened because it is large in relation to the trunk. The two small branches do not need pruning because they will not compete with the trunk. (Right illustration)

- 7** Branches are removed from the trunk and other branches by making 3 cuts to prevent bark tearing. Final cut is back to the branch collar. Cut as shown when the collar is not visible. (Below left and center illustration)



- 8** Pruning roots at planting that circle or dive into soil removes roots that could cause stability and health problems later. Cut at A not B. (Above right illustration)

## Structural Pruning Checklist

- ☞ Develop and maintain a dominant leader
- ☞ Identify the lowest branch in the permanent crown
- ☞ Prevent branches below permanent crown from growing too large
- ☞ Space main branches along the dominant trunk
- ☞ Keep all branches less than 1/2 the trunk diameter by shortening or thinning them
- ☞ Suppress growth on branches with included bark
- ☞ These guidelines may not apply for trees pruned for utility line clearances

### PRUNING SAFETY

- ☞ Prune from the ground with proper tools and safety equipment
- ☞ Do not prune anywhere near powerlines
- ☞ Hire an ISA Certified Arborist for larger trees, if pruning cannot be done from the ground or if anywhere near powerlines
- ☞ Locate an ISA Certified Arborist at [www.TreesAreGood.com](http://www.TreesAreGood.com)



This tree pruning cue card provided to you courtesy of  
 Roots Plus Growers the Florida Chapter ISA  
 & The University of Florida IFAS Extension

Visit us at [rootsplusgrowers.org](http://rootsplusgrowers.org) & [floridaisa.org](http://floridaisa.org)