

Winter Tree Pruning Tips:

Now that winter is in full swing the last thing many of us are thinking about are trees. We usually associate tree care practices with the warmer months of the year. That's when we spend most of our time outdoors taking note of the surrounding landscape. When it comes to tree care, especially pruning, winter is often the best time. Trees are dormant and less susceptible to disease and insects compared to the growing season. Pruning during the winter months is beneficial to both young and mature trees.

Young tree care:

For young trees winter is an excellent time to trim out branches that may intersect or cross within the canopy. Identifying a central leader within the canopy is much easier too. Maintaining or creating a central or dominant leader in young trees will ensure symmetric canopy development. Removing a small portion of the lower branches will help to shape and further define the tree.

Mature tree care:

When pruning older mature trees, two practices in particular are very beneficial. They include: thinning the canopy and removing deadwood. Doing so will help to encourage air movement through the canopy, thus reducing branch breakage and future decay. While thinning the canopy, it is also a good time to remove any lower branches that may be interfering with lawn care, driveways or structures.

It is important to remember the rule of thirds when pruning both young and mature trees. Two-thirds of the overall tree height should be canopy, the lower third stem. Over-pruning or raising the lower branches too high will stress the tree and create unnecessary branch sprouting, especially on younger trees. It is also important to make the proper cut when removing branches. Do not make flush cuts against the main stem, this creates weak spots within the tree and will slow the healing process. Also, do not leave branch stubs, they look unsightly and are an avenue for future decay and infection. Many of these pruning activities can be carried out with a basic hand saw or pruners, especially on younger trees. Older tree care usually requires a trained tree care professional to perform the work. With proper maintenance this winter, your trees will have a healthier start next spring.

For questions regarding pruning or other tree health concerns, contact: **Sam Klocksien (763) 300-0452**