

West Des Moines Tree Pruning Guidelines

The West Des Moines Urban Forestry Program inspects every city owned tree in the city right-of-way (ROW) and the mowed portions of city parks once every three years. Trees will be pruned if needed and information for the inspected tree will be updated in the City's tree inventory.

Street & Median Trees:

Maintenance pruning lifts right-of-way trees above pedestrian and vehicle traffic and improves sight lines. Figure 1 below illustrates the branch height goals of the tree maintenance program for trees in the city right-of-way. Large trees will eventually be pruned 14 feet above the street and 8 feet above sidewalks. Smaller trees will be pruned to keep branches out of the street and off sidewalks. Attention will also be given to street trees that have branches that are hanging low to the ground and/or touching structures on the adjacent private property.

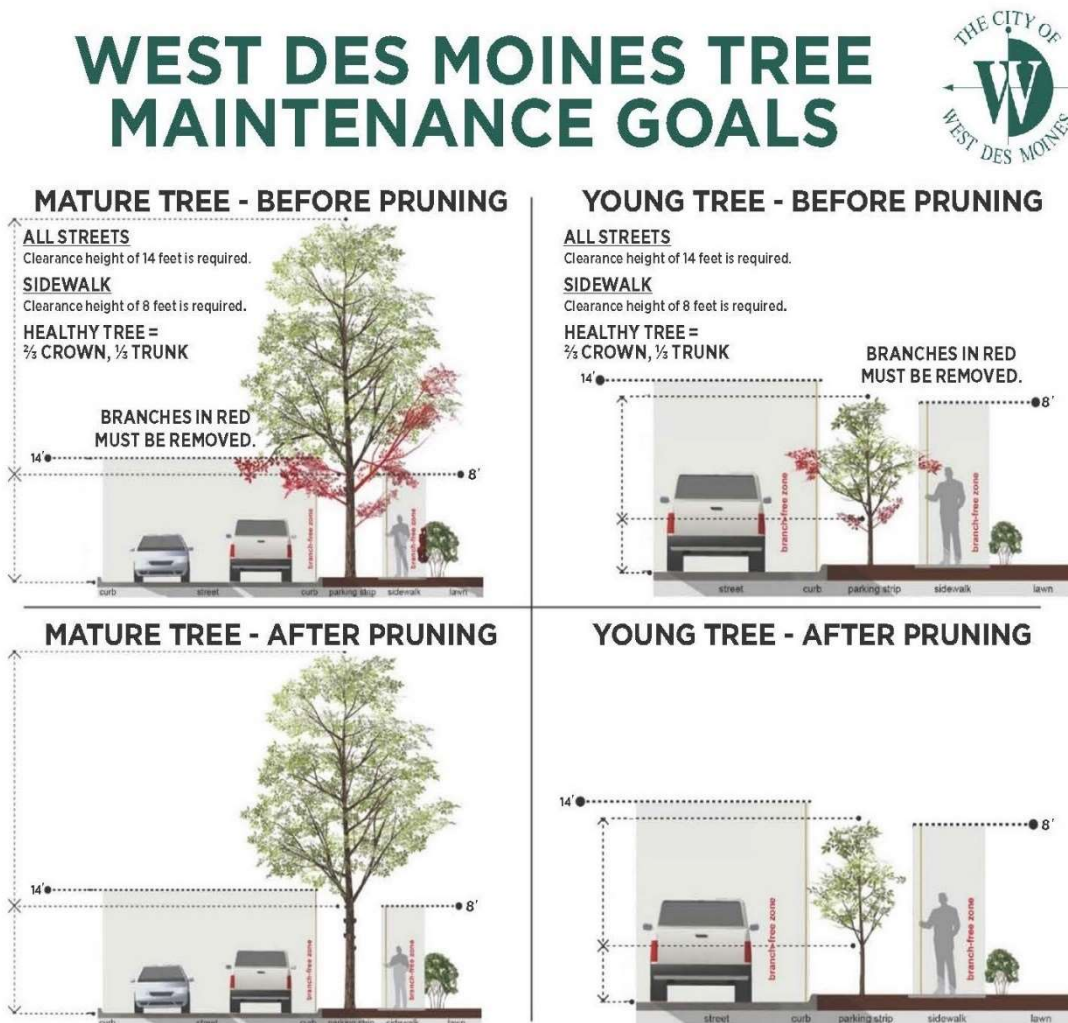


Figure 1: Diagram demonstrating the pruning height goals of the Tree Maintenance Program for mature and young trees.



Figure 2: Codominant stems can lead to tree splitting. These situations can be avoided with proper corrective pruning of young trees.

Maintenance pruning minimizes future structural problems in trees that develop multiple leaders, codominant stems and/or included bark (Figure 2).

Pruning cuts should be outside the branch collar and branch bark ridge to take advantage of the trees natural defense and sealing mechanisms (Figure 3). Care should be taken to not leave branch stubs.

The City's maintenance pruning program will address broken, sprouting, suckering, crossing, crowded, and rubbing branches. It will also address girdling roots when feasible. The red branches in Figure 4 indicate situations that should be addressed when maintenance pruning. Care will also be taken to clear obstructed signage and light poles to the extent possible. High risk trees will be removed.

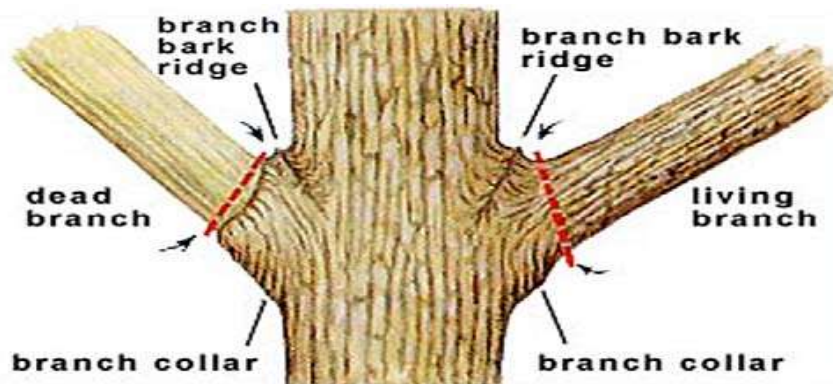


Figure 3: Pruning cuts should be made outside the branch collar and branch bark ridge

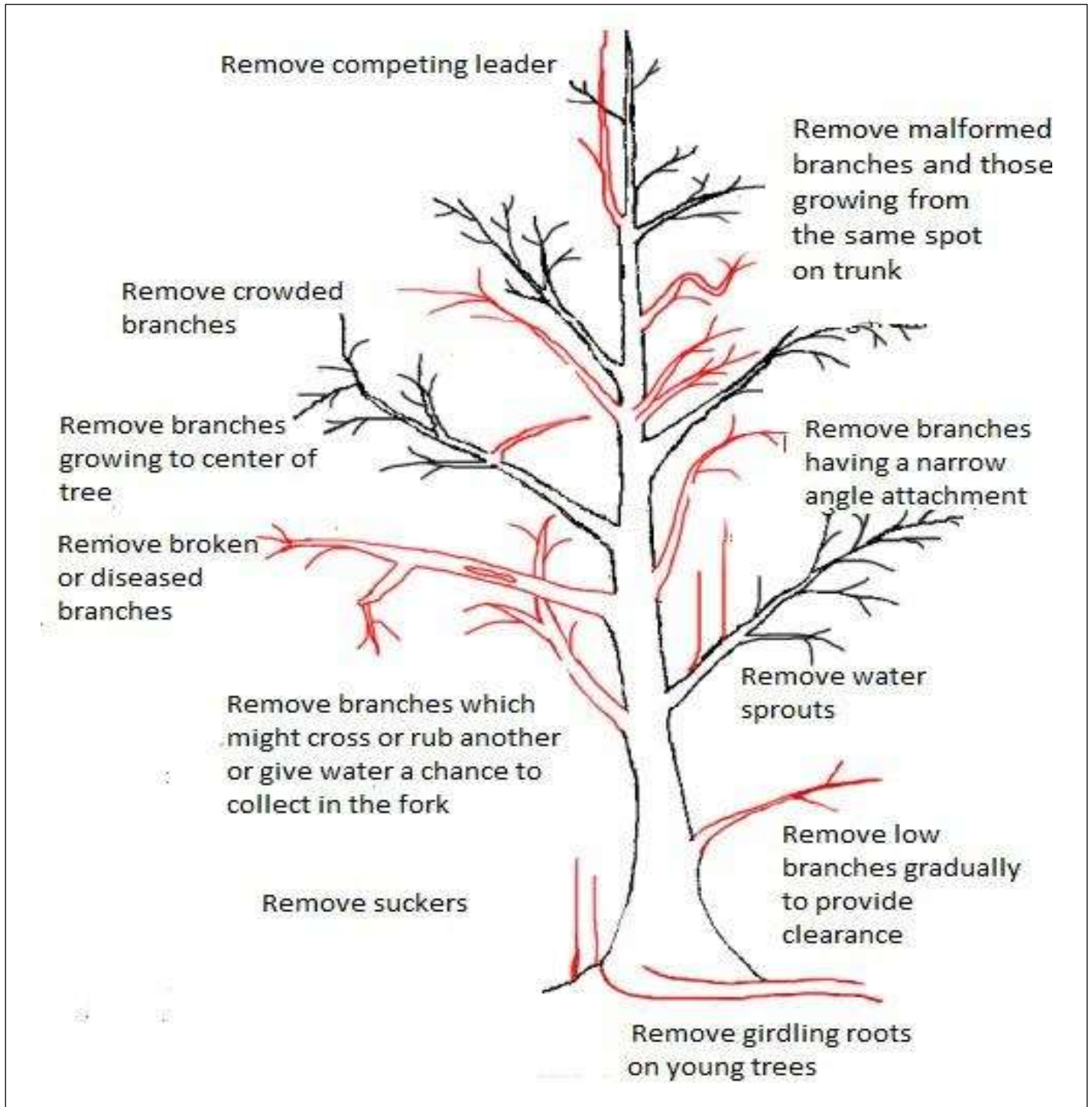


Figure 4: Illustration of branches and situations that may need to be addressed when maintenance pruning. Branches in red need to be removed.

Park & Facility Trees:

Park and facility trees need not be pruned to the same heights as street trees. However, hardwoods should be pruned to a height that allows mowing crews to safely pass under the trees. Conifers will not be pruned unless their lower branches are dying or pruning of lower branches is needed to increase airflow through the tree to address specific insect or disease issues. All trees will be inspected for

codominant stems, broken branches, sprouting branches, suckers, crossing and rubbing branches, crowded branches, and girdling roots and pruned as needed. High risk trees will be removed.