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## Pruning Shade Trees

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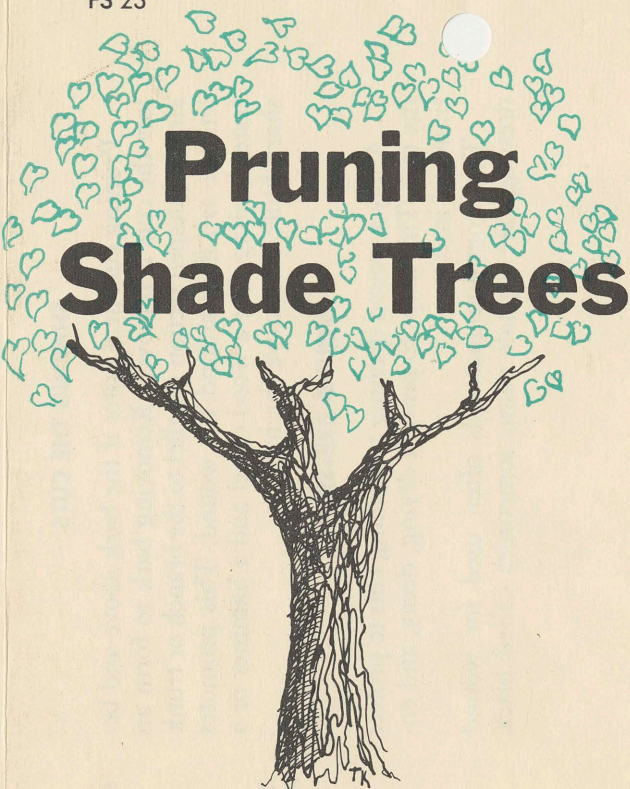
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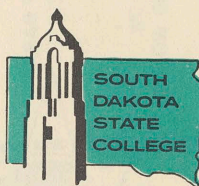
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# Pruning Shade Trees

Shade trees may need pruning to promote their health, improve their appearance, or remove branches that may injure people or property. Examples of such pruning are removal of dead, dying, diseased or broken branches. In some cases you may want to remove low growing or overhanging branches for convenience and safety.

## WHEN TO PRUNE

Pruning wounds heal faster if the cuts are made in the early part of the growing season. For this reason it is desirable that most pruning be done in the spring. If you have to prune later in the season make the cuts before freeze-up.

## EQUIPMENT FOR PRUNING

A handsaw with 6 teeth to the inch is adequate for normal pruning cuts. For large cuts use a one-man crosscut saw.

Saws and other equipment especially for pruning are available and a good investment if you do a considerable amount of pruning.

## HOW TO PRUNE

Make clean cuts flush with the remaining branch or main trunk. Do not leave stubs. The illustration gives pruning details. Note that large branches should be undercut first to avoid ripping the bark. Saw about one-third of the way through the underside of the branch about a foot from where the final cut will be made. Saw through the top of the branch about 2 inches beyond the undercut. When the branch breaks off remove the stub with a third cut.

If considerable pruning is necessary, start at the top of the tree. This will allow removal of cut branches that have lodged in the tree, as the work progresses downward.

## SHAPING THE CUTS

Pruning cuts heal faster if the bark above and below the cuts is removed. Removing bark to form an almond-shaped section parallel to the branch or trunk lets the sap flow around the wound. This promotes faster healing. Use a wood chisel and a hammer or a sharp knife to remove the bark.

## WOUND DRESSING

Apply a wound dressing to pruning cuts to protect the tree. This helps to prevent drying, decay, and entrance of insects.

Two common materials often used for wound dressings are asphalt paint, sometimes called black

asphaltum, and orange shellac. You can get these at most paint stores. There are also several special tree paints on the market. These include liquid plastic and asphalt base paints. These materials may be applied with a paint brush. Some are also available in aerosol form.

Keep wounds covered with a dressing until healing is completed. This may require renewal of the dressing from time to time.

## SAFETY

Any work above the ground is hazardous and pruning is no exception.

1. Keep tools in good condition.
2. Handle tools with care while working in the tree.
3. Avoid working in trees when they are wet and slippery.
4. Watch out for electric lines passing through the trees.
5. When using a ladder, have someone steady it.
6. If you have to climb in the tree, be careful not to put your weight on weak banches.
7. Look out for "widow-makers" (loose branches hanging in the tree).

