Sherdec Tree Service LLC

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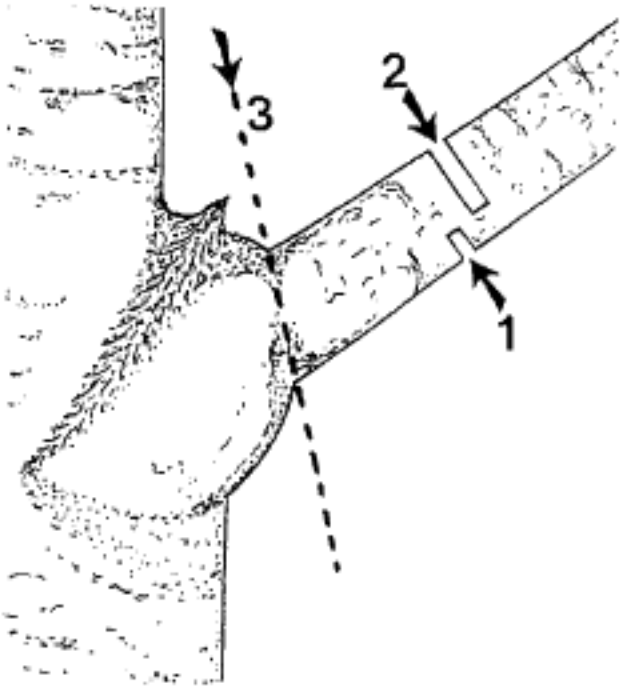
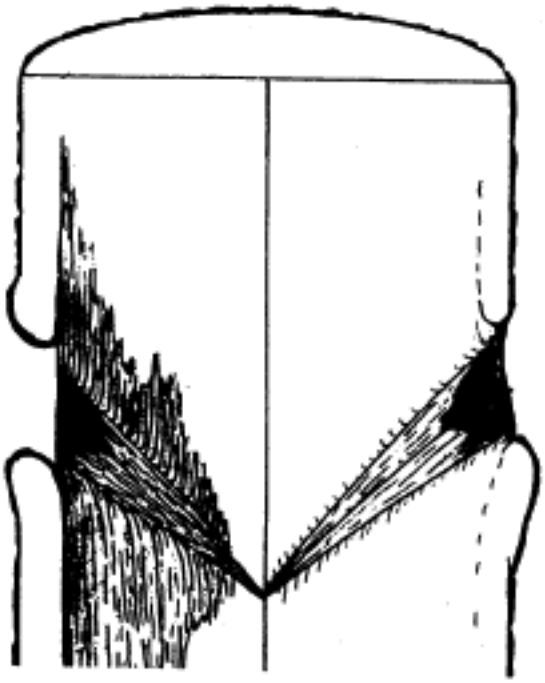
Proper Pruning Techniques



Cut #1 to prevent bark tearing into the main stem. Cut #2 to remove weight of the branch. Cut #3 just in front of the branch collar to speed closure of the wound. Do not cut behind the branch bark ridge.



Flush Cuts remove the branch collar and allow decay into the tree (left). Proper cuts preserve the collar protecting against decay organisms (right).

Diagrams from Modern Arboriculture, courtesy of Dr. Alex Shigo

Rules for Pruning

1. There must be a specific reason for removing any branch when pruning a tree. Without this philosophy and proper training, pruning becomes nothing more than a series of random cuts that will often stress a tree.
2. Never prune branches in the middle or leave stubbed ends. These wounds are easy access points for decay. Improper cuts also cause profuse sprouting; sprouts develop into weakly attached branches that become hazardous over time.
3. Do not remove the branch collar. Removal of the branch collar (a flush cut) allows a host of decay organisms into the tree, which will eventually form a hollow in the trunk equal to the size of the tree at the time the cut was made! (see diagrams above)
4. DO NOT use pruning paint. Pruning paint seals the wound and acts as an incubator for decay organisms that destroy the health of your trees. The only exception is if you must prune an oak when the fungus that causes Oak wilt is sporulating and the beetles that carry the spores are active; then, only use orange shellac to protect the wound to reduce the risk of disease transmission.
5. Climbing spikes are a destructive tool that cause injury to your valuable trees when used for climbing live trees. They are acceptable only when used during tree removals.