

# Mature Tree Pruning

# TREE CARE

**P**runing mature trees properly for best tree health:

- ▶ Removes dying, diseased or injured wood.
- ▶ Removes crossing or crowded branches.
- ▶ Restructures tree shape.
- ▶ Reduces tree height.

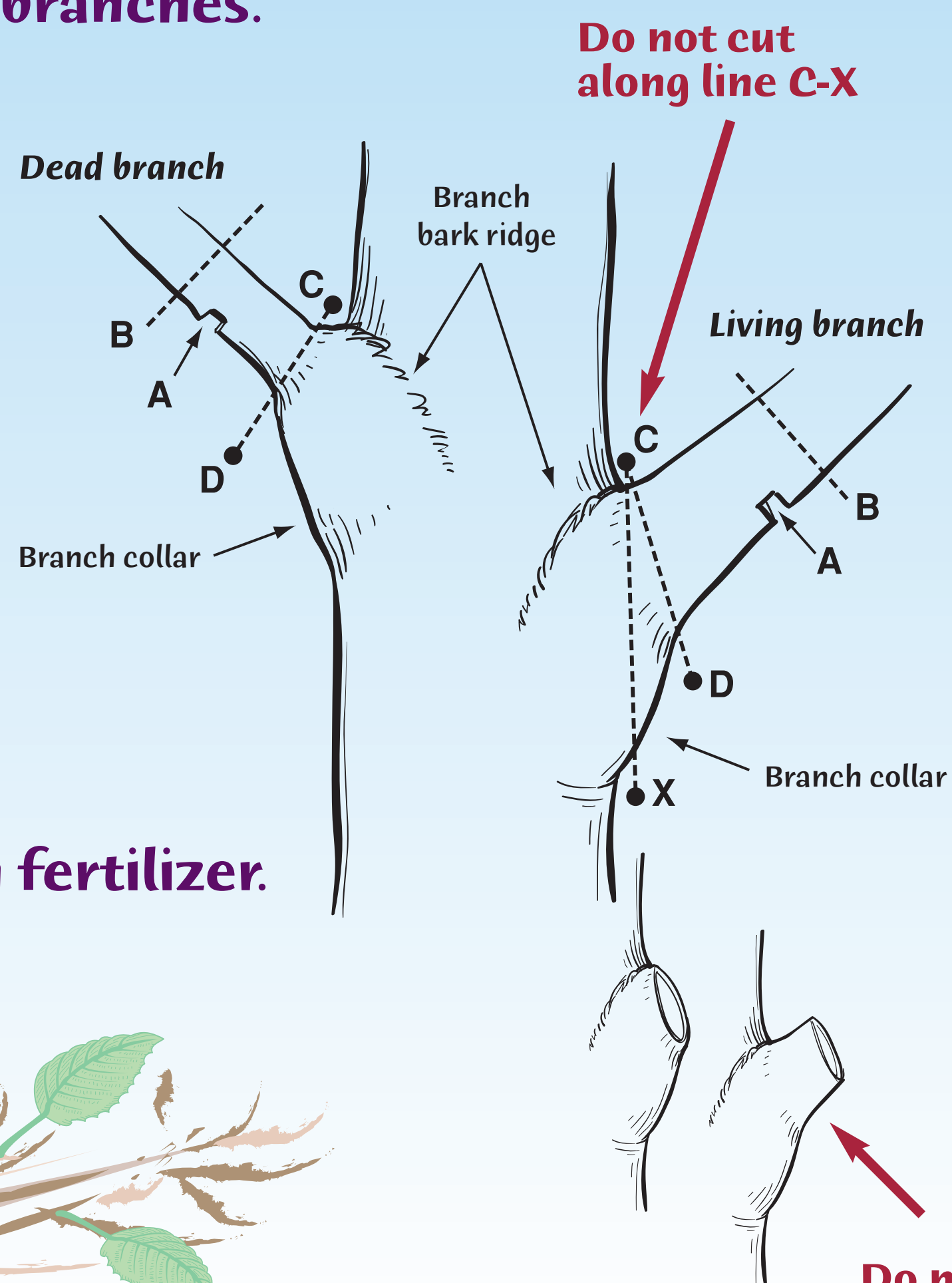
## Do Not Top Trees! Instead:

- ▶ Start out right by planting trees that will fit your available space at maturity.
- ▶ Prune young trees for structure and form during the first 3 - 5 years.
- ▶ To slow growth, avoid nitrogen fertilizer.
- ▶ Prune properly and regularly.

## Proper pruning principles:

- ▶ Use thinning cuts instead of topping by cutting back to lateral branches or to the trunk.
- ▶ Make cuts just outside of the branch collar.
- ▶ Avoid large cuts.
- ▶ Do not use sealer.
- ▶ To remove large limbs use a 3-saw cut:

- 1) Cut part way through the branch at A
- 2) Cut it off at B
- 3) Make the final cut along C-D.



# Thinning vs. Topping

## BEFORE PRUNING

## TOPPING, NO!

### 1 year later

The topped tree is stubbed and only a remnant of a lovely tree remains.

### 3 years later

Vigorous upright sprouts emerge. Sprouts are weakly attached and prone to breakage. They are abnormal, grow rapidly, and cause the tree to lose its natural shape.

### 6 years later

A topped tree is as tall as the pruned tree yet far bushier and more prone to limb failure than originally.

## THINNING AND CROWN REDUCTION, YES!

### 1 year later

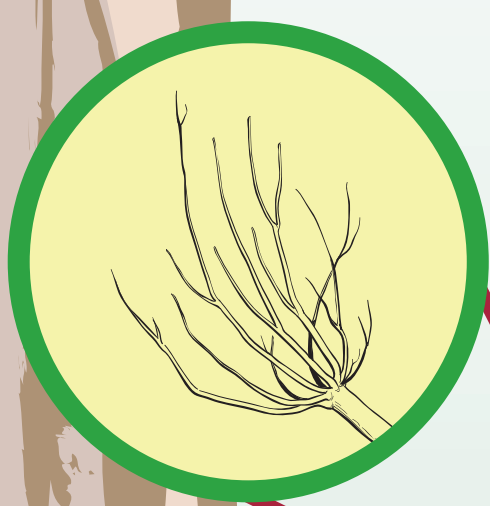
If pruned properly, corrective thinning and crown reduction cuts occur but beauty and form are retained.

### 3 years later

Growth of thinned branches is spread evenly throughout canopy, maintaining its natural shape.

### 6 years later

A properly pruned tree is safer with strongly attached branches, more beautiful in form and its size better controlled.



When severely pruned, a tree branch will form many vigorous upright sprouts. These sprouts are weakly attached and look unsightly over time.