

TRAINING YOUNG TREES FOR STRUCTURE AND FORM

A well-trained tree is easier to maintain than an untrained tree.

Trained trees have good structure, such as a strong central leader, appropriate vertical spacing between branches, branches that are well spaced radially around the trunk, and strong branch angle attachments.

By providing training during the first five years, a tree will be easier to maintain at maturity, live longer, be more structurally sound, and have a lower risk of branch failure. Untrained trees are more likely to have structural defects possibly decreasing their life and an eventual loss of benefits to the urban forest. In addition, there is the loss of invested time and money.

How to Train Young Trees

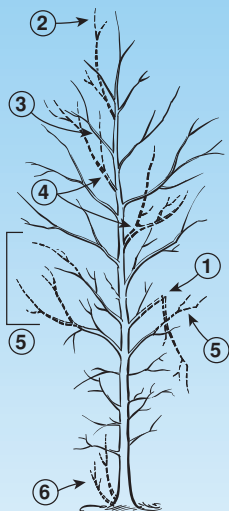
Recommended 5 step process:

1. Remove broken, diseased, dying or dead branches.
2. Select a central upright leader and remove or head back competing upright shoots.

(see reverse for training steps)



3. Select the lowest permanent (scaffold) branch. This branch is the lowest branch that will remain on the tree through its life. This is determined by the use and location of the tree. Remember a branch at 4' will always be at 4'.
4. Select primary scaffold branches and cut back or remove competing branches. The scaffold branches should be radially spaced around the trunk and vertically spaced 12 - 15" between branches. Select scaffolds with strong branch attachment with diameter being no more than half the diameter of trunk.
5. Select temporary branches below the lowest permanent branch. Remove branches that have a diameter greater than $\frac{1}{3}$ the trunk.



No more than 25% of a young tree's canopy should be removed in one year. Training is recommended during the dormant season or winter months.

Each year apply these steps to a young tree until good structure and form is achieved.

For more information about tree pruning contact your local University of California Cooperative Extension office, the ANR publications website at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>, or consult a certified arborist.



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