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1 page from Mario Lanthier

PRUNING YOUNG TREES

Presentation by Dr. Larry Costello at the “2004 Farwest Show and Seminars”, held August 26 to 28 in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Costello is with the University of California Cooperative Extension and a co-author of the recent book “Abiotic Disorders of Landscape Plants – A Diagnostic Guide”.

Reasons to train young trees

- 1) Trained trees are structurally stronger and less prone to failure.
- 2) Trained trees are easier and less costly to maintain when mature.
- 3) Trained trees have a greater potential to be long-lived trees.

5 steps to young tree pruning

- 1) *Remove broken, diseases, dying or dead branches.*
- 2) *Select a leader and remove competing leaders.*
 - The leader is the trunk becoming narrow at the top, a single stem in a vertical position.
 - Co-dominant stems should be removed or cut back (also called “subordinate”).
- 3) *Select the lowest permanent branch.*
 - This is the lowest branch attached to the trunk that will remain on the tree.
 - The height of this branch is determined by the tree location: 2 meters high (6 feet) in a parking strip, 2.4 meters (8 feet) over a sidewalk, 4.3 meters (14 feet) over a street.
- 4) *Select scaffold branches and cut back or remove competing branches.*
 - These branches are permanent and located above the “lowest permanent branch”.
 - Branches should have strong attachment and a diameter under 50% of trunk diameter.
 - Vertical spacing between scaffolds should be 45 cm (15 inches) or more for large trees (trunk diameter over 30 cm at maturity), and 30 cm (12 inches) or more for small trees.
 - Leave small diameter branches as temporaries. Subordinate branches too vigorous.
- 5) *Select temporary branches below the lowest permanent branch.*
 - These branches help increase trunk caliper and are removed later.
 - Remove or shorten branches with a diameter 1/3 or more of trunk diameter.