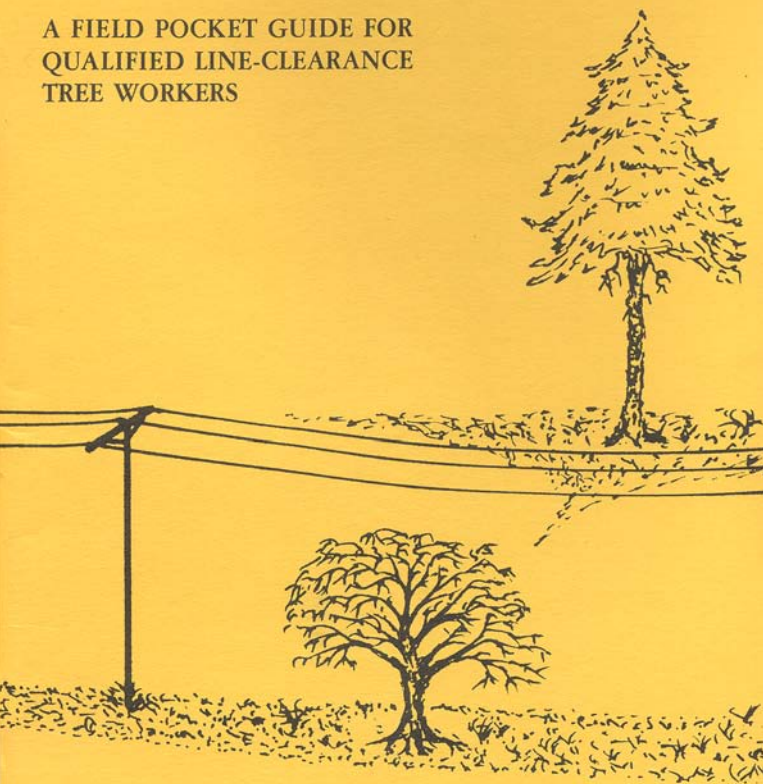


# PRUNING TREES

## NEAR ELECTRIC UTILITY LINES

A FIELD POCKET GUIDE FOR  
QUALIFIED LINE-CLEARANCE  
TREE WORKERS



DR. ALEX L. SHIGO

# PRUNING TREES NEAR ELECTRIC UTILITY LINES

by

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## PLEASE NOTE

**This guide is only for qualified line-clearance workers.** It is not for homeowners or others who have not been trained properly to work near electric utility lines. However, all people who care about trees should read this guide to learn what pruning practices are best for trees near these lines.

**The guidelines are for high-value trees** in cities, residential areas, parks, campgrounds, scenic areas and highways, and other places where tree health, beauty, and safety are important.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I thank the people who gave valuable comments  
for the improvement of this guide:*

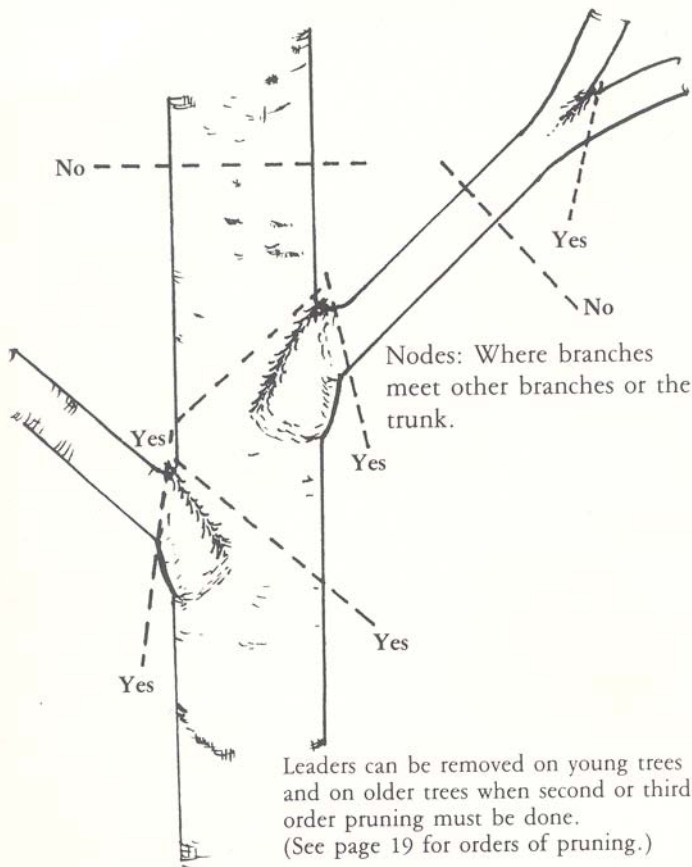
*Dan Baluss, W. B. Cormack, Claude Desjardins, John Goodfellow,  
S. T. Griffiths, Keith Jones, L. Brian Morris, Eric Rey-Lescure, R. Neil  
Thiessen, Eric S. Ulrich, Michael R. Watson, Richard Wells, and James  
Young.*

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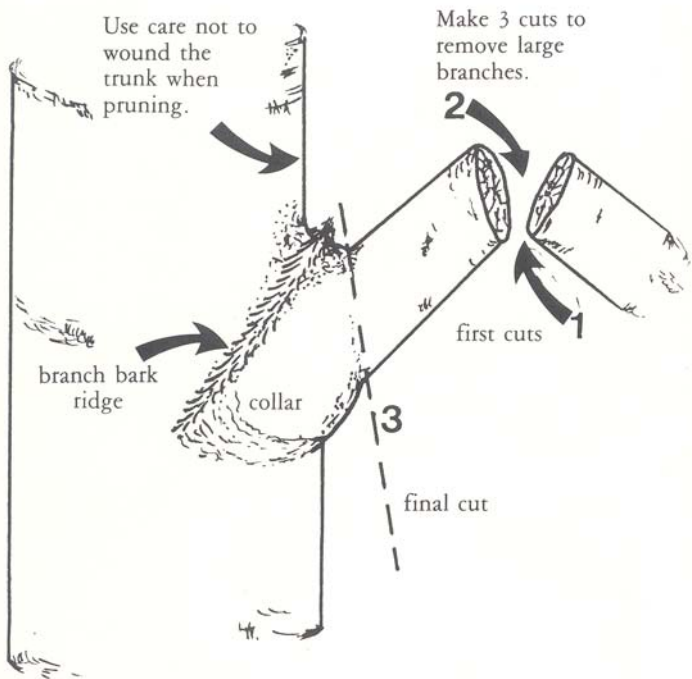
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## CUT AT NODES



Making cuts between nodes leads to excessive sprouting, and to cracks and rot. Cracks and rot are major causes of branch and trunk failure.

# NATURAL TARGET PRUNING



Cut as close as possible to the branch collar. Do not injure or remove the collar. Injury or removal of the collar destroys a major defense system of the tree, and also leads to excessive sprouting. Do not leave stubs. Stubs are entry courts for rot-causing fungi. Do not paint the pruning cuts. Wound dressings do not stop rot.

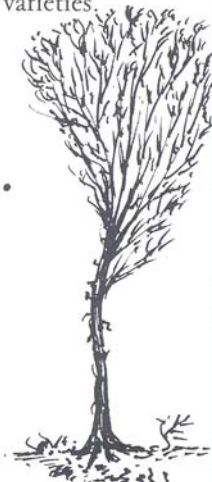
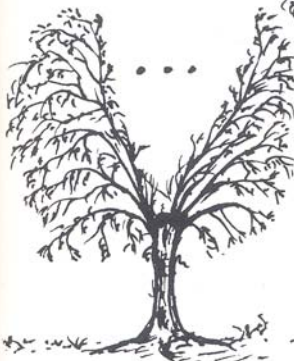
Many tree shapes are possible when you start pruning the right species and varieties the correct way early in their lives. The tree can remain healthy and safe for many years.

• • •

• • •



Dwarf or low-growing, compact-form varieties.



Large-maturing species.

THESE FORMS ARE POSSIBLE  
WITH CORRECT PRUNING.

## SUMMARY

1. Safety first or life won't last!
2. Know and practice OSHA\* and ANSI\*\* requirements.
3. Seek permanent solutions. Do not plant trees near electric lines; or plant only low-growing, compact-form varieties.
4. Start pruning young trees during regular pruning cycles.
5. Remove entire branches that are growing toward the lines; or branches that when cut would produce sprouts that would grow toward the lines.
6. Make cuts at nodes.
7. Cut branches as close as possible to the collar.
8. Do not paint cuts. Wound dressings do not stop rot.
9. Remove branches that have cracks and rot.
10. Remember 90-3-90, and that this is a guide, not a rule book full of absolutes.

\* Occupational Safety and Health Administration

\*\* American National Standards Institute

TREES AND ELECTRIC UTILITY LINES  
CAN EXIST TOGETHER



IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER