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When to Prune

Submitted by Lew Edwards

Most routine pruning to remove weak, diseased, or dead limbs can be accomplished at any time during the year with little effect on the tree. As a rule, growth is maximized and wound closure is fastest if pruning takes place before the spring growth flush. Some trees, such as maples and birches, tend to “bleed” if pruned early in the spring. It may be unsightly, but it is of little consequence to the tree.

A few tree diseases, such as oak wilt, can be spread when pruning wounds allow spores access into the tree. Susceptible trees should not be pruned during active transmission periods.

Heavy pruning just after the spring growth flush should be avoided. At that time, trees have just expended a great deal of energy to produce foliage and early shoot growth. Removal of a large percentage of foliage at the time can stress the tree.

Lew is a Certified Arborist with Advance Tree Service in Moraga. For more information on pruning, visit their booth at the Community Faire on May 10th