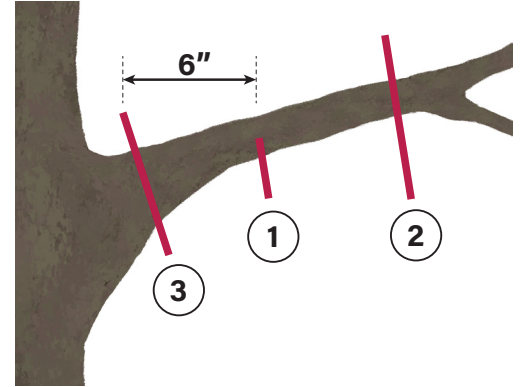# an introduction to
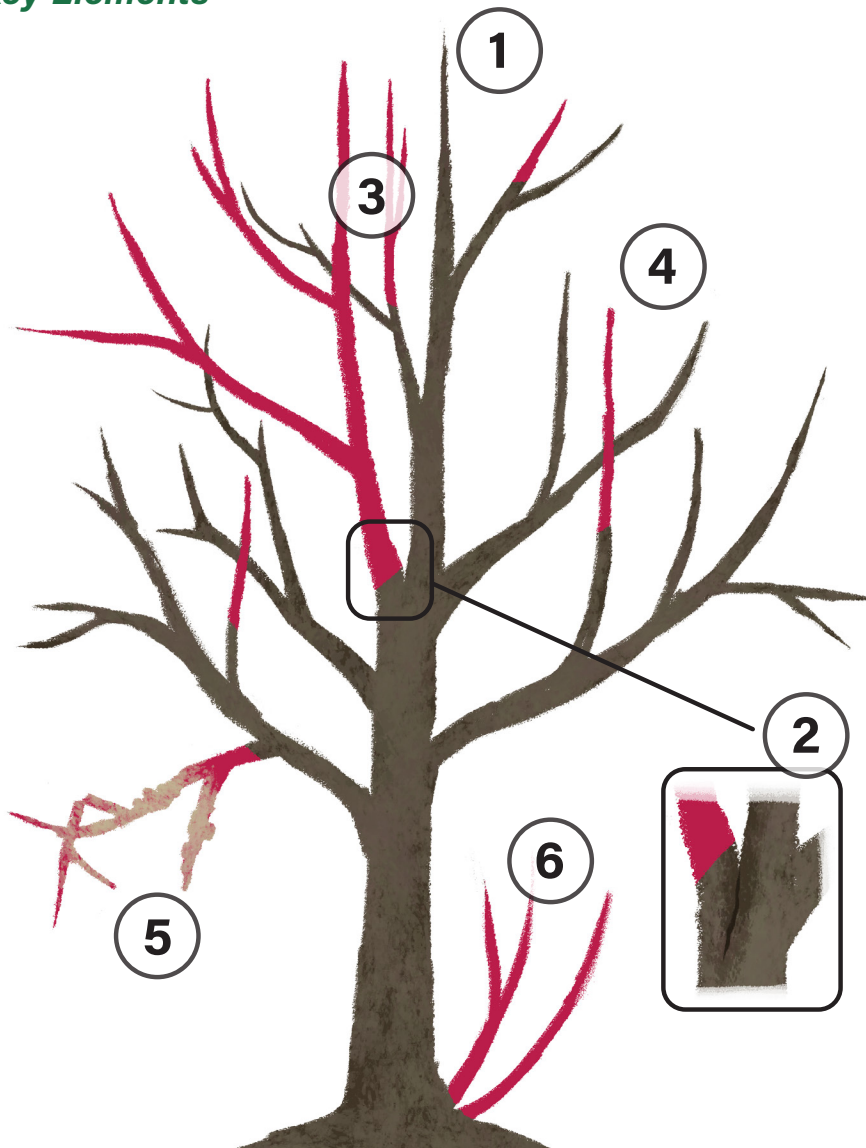# STRUCTURAL PRUNING

What is Structural Pruning?

Structural pruning helps a tree develop strong structure, so that the tree lives longer, is more resilient, and holds its place in urban environments. A strong central leader and scaffolding branches off the main trunk are key, and pruning should also take into consideration final height requirements for the location.

- Only prune what is necessary.
- Prune up to 1/3 of the canopy per pruning cycle.
- Prune to an outside node (where you want the branch to grow).

Branch Collar Cutting

6"

① ② ③

Key Elements

① ③ ④ ② ⑥ ⑤

① develop central leader & remove co-dominance

② reduce poor unions & develop scaffolding

③ reduce aggressive branching

④ remove crossing branches & poorly located sprouts

⑤ remove dead, damaged & diseased limbs

⑥ remove suckers

Note!

- Prune and train knowing the natural form of the tree.

Tools

hand saw loppers pole pruner long reach pruner

Notes!

◦ Keep tools sharp.

◦ Disinfect tools to prevent disease transfer.

Making Cuts

How and where a cut is made affects how the tree heals. Cutting too close removes the branch union; cutting too far away leaves a stump, which prevents the cut from sealing.
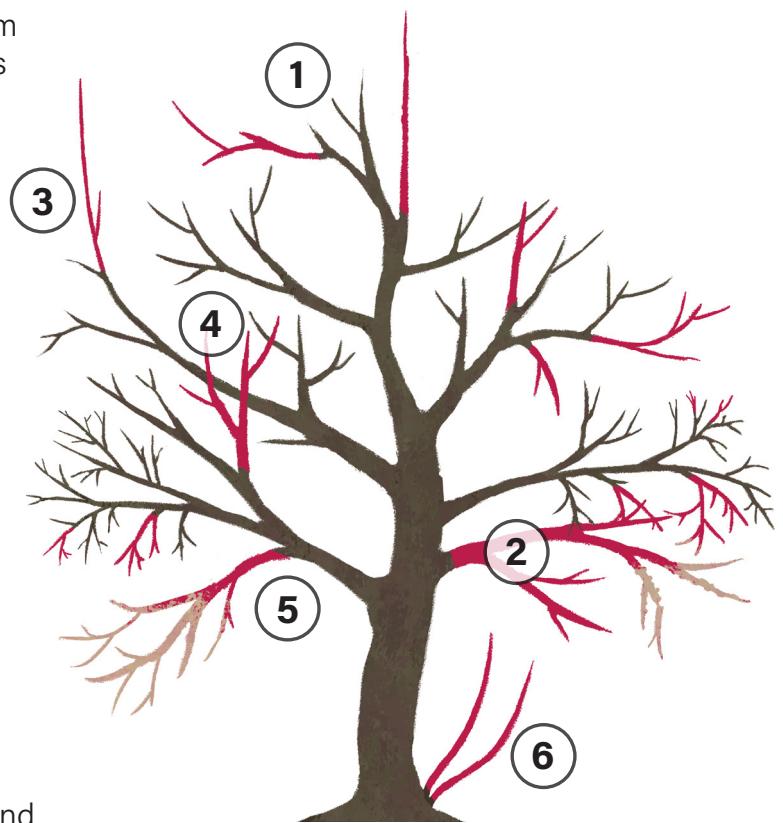
too close   too far away   too sharp   correct

Structural Pruning for Fruit Trees

Fruit trees tend to be shorter and rounder in form so that fruit is easier to access, but key elements of structural pruning still apply.

1. develop modified leader: direct tree to grow more full and round

2. reduce poor unions & develop scaffolding

3. reduce aggressive branching

4. remove crossing branches & poorly located sprouts

5. remove dead, damaged & diseased limbs

6. remove suckers

Note!

◦ Train branches to 45° angles. This helps with two things: sunlight reaching buds and branches supporting the weight of fruit.