

TREE TIPS

TREE & SHRUB CARE FROM BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

Structural pruning by Tom Smiley, PhD

A small investment early in a tree's life can have a big payoff as the tree matures.

Some of the common causes of tree failure can be prevented when trees are young. One of the keys to developing strong trees is structural pruning, or pruning to improve tree structure.

With young trees, our goal is to prune them to create a structure that:

- Is resistant to future breakage
- Won't interfere with pedestrians
- Looks good
- Is long lived

The earlier we start this process, and the more often it is repeated, the better the results will be. We like to start structural pruning when the tree is young, and continue with it as the tree matures.

When structurally pruning a young tree, we examine it carefully and make decisions on which branches to remove. We first identify the central leader



of the tree: this is the tallest, most centrally located, healthy branch. We preserve this branch. Other branches that are growing upright near it are reduced or removed. By doing this we can eliminate one of the most common failure points on mature trees, the co-dominant stem union.

We also identify the lowest permanent branch on the tree. Many lower branches, if allowed to grow, will interfere with pedestrians, vehicles or buildings. Branches below the lowest permanent branch can be reduced or removed while the tree is developing so that large cuts on the trunk won't

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Pruning a young tree to improve structure is a wise investment.



Boxwood blight: not all gloom and doom

by Andrew L. Loyd, PhD, Plant Pathologist

Boxwood blight is a fungal disease that causes leaf spots, twig cankers, rapid defoliation, and eventual death of boxwood plants if left unmanaged. All species and varieties of boxwood are considered susceptible. English and American boxwood are most severely affected, but there is some tolerance to boxwood blight in other



Blighted plants showing rapid defoliation.



Close-up of leaf spots.

species and hybrids—especially Asian species. Pachysandra and other members of the boxwood family are also susceptible. Since discovery of this disease in the United States in 2011, boxwood blight has spread rapidly across the country and can now be found in numerous states from coast to coast. The abnormally warm and humid weather of 2018 resulted in an unprecedented amount of boxwood blight detected in the landscape across the eastern United States. This is because the causal fungus, *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*, thrives in warm (60°F–80°F) and

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Structural pruning *(continued from page 1)*

be needed later. Making smaller cuts reduces the risk of decay moving into the trunk. Ideally, we would like to see all the lower branches be half the diameter of the trunk. Larger diameter branches in that area are removed or reduced.

These steps and more go into structural pruning. The exact cuts will depend on the tree species and its location in your landscape. If we can start the process shortly after the tree is planted and continue as it matures, the result is a strong, long-lasting and healthy tree.



Notice the structure of the pruned tree at left compared to the unpruned tree above.



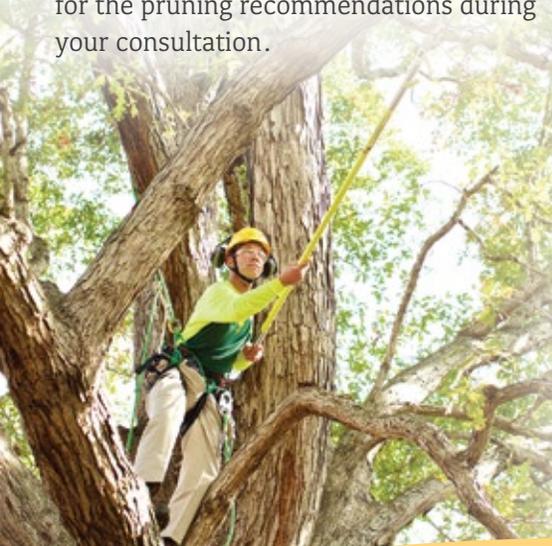
Bartlett offers a full range of pruning expertise

There are a variety of pruning techniques to fulfill landscape and tree health goals. Bartlett arborists are trained to evaluate trees' attributes, and they know what type of pruning will achieve different objectives. Your Bartlett Arborist Representative will explain the reasons for the pruning recommendations during your consultation.

In addition to pruning dead and dying branches for tree health and safety, specific pruning can be performed to accomplish the following:

- Reduce wind resistance and subsequent storm damage
- Improve shape or eliminate interference with structures
- Increase the amount of light for grass or ground cover under a tree
- Improve the view of mountains, shoreline or other desirable features
- Give young trees a strong framework for future growth

Bartlett also provides shrub pruning (not to be confused with shrub shearing) and fruit tree pruning. Plus, we can develop and maintain formal pruning styles, including pollarding, pleaching, espalier, and topiary.



Boxwood blight

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wet weather. Because disease pressure was high in 2018, there will be a large amount of infectious spores in our landscapes in the coming years.

Successful management of boxwood blight involves a multifaceted program that includes sanitation (e.g., removal of infected tissues, cleaning tools), avoidance of overhead irrigation and application of products that protect new growth and reduce sporulation of the fungus. Severely impacted plants,

There are preventive products that can successfully protect new growth.

which have been infected for multiple years, should be removed when appropriate. Removal of the defoliated leaf litter can help reduce inoculum. Because it is nearly impossible to remove all defoliated leaves, mulching can reduce the chance of splashing infectious spores on healthy tissues. When possible, boxwood should not be pruned during the summer months. Lastly, applications of preventive products can protect new flushes of growth. Multiple applications throughout the season are needed for good success. Although boxwood blight can result in plant death, great responses are being seen with our treatment programs. It is not all gloom and doom!

Fun with trees **Make some autumn leaf coasters**

The first step of this project is to gather and press a variety of leaves. Prepare more leaves than needed to give yourself creative options. You'll have a few weeks while the leaves flatten to get four white ceramic tiles, waterproof Mod Podge decoupage glue, a small paint brush, and some felt. Then comes the fun! Arrange flat leaves on the tiles, fastening them down with thin layers of Mod Podge. Continue adding coats of the glue, allowing the tiles to dry between coats, until all the leaves are secure and you are pleased with the surface. Don't worry if it looks milky, the glue will dry clear. Last, glue felt to the underside of the tiles to finish your coasters. Cheers!



TREE FOCUS:

Stewartia (*Stewartia pseudocamellia*)

History

Stewartia are wonderful ornamental plants known for their showy flowers, autumn foliage, colorful bark, and low maintenance. There are two native species of Stewartia in North America and many southeast Asian species.

Culture

- Grows best in full sun to partial shade
- Most species prefer well-drained soil
- Many species grow across a range of hardiness zones
- No serious insect pests or fungal diseases

Concerns

- Does not grow well in soils that are poorly drained, such as clay

Bartlett Management Practices

- Improve soil drainage and soil oxygen content with Root Invigoration™ to decrease the likelihood of newly established plants dying and improve vigor of well-established plants



WONDERS OF NATURE The amazing baobab tree

Baobab (*Adansonia* spp.) trees are mostly found in arid regions of Madagascar and mainland Africa. Another common name for these trees is 'the tree of life' because they can provide shelter, clothing, food, and water for animals and humans.



The baobab reaches heights of 16 to 98 ft. and trunk diameters of 23 to 36 ft. A trunk can hold up to 31,700 gallons of water. Mature trees are usually hollow. The cork-like bark and huge trunk are fire resistant and can be used for making cloth and rope. The leaves are used as condiments and medicines. The fruit, called monkey bread, is edible and full of vitamin C.



Ask your Arborist to inspect your property this autumn.

Sedgwick Gardens

Framed by a narrow entrance, nestled atop a long glacial hill in Beverly, Massachusetts, is Sedgwick Gardens at Long Hill. A property of the Trustees of Reservations, Long Hill is the nation's first, and Massachusetts's largest preservation and conservation nonprofit.

The Sedgwick family transformed this 114-acre property from a hillside pasture to formal gardens, abutting the natural woods. The sanctuary of living garden rooms, originally arranged by Mabel Sedgwick in the early 1900s, features woody plants and

naturalized perennials. The property is distinguished by the effortless transition between garden rooms and native forest. In addition to the gardens, there is a 1.2-mile loop trail and a restored orchard.

Long Hill's Superintendent and Horticulturalist, Dan Bouchard, has overseen the plant collection and preserved the original design intent for the past 25 years. Jack Ingram, the manager of Bartlett's local office, frequently visits the property, assisting with many plant healthcare needs.



We encourage you to visit Sedgwick Gardens at Long Hill. Learn more at www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/northeast/long-hill.html



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