

# Winter Pruning: Deciduous Trees

ELS Maintenance, Inc



**W**e are fast approaching the beginning of fall where the leaves on our deciduous trees begin to change color and drop off as winter arrives. This presents the perfect opportunity for pruning of these trees as they slide into dormancy during the winter months.

Deciduous trees such as Ash, Mulberry, and Elm (among others) are known for their ability to shed their leaves in the fall, providing beautiful multi-colored leaves beforehand. The purpose of this is to help the tree survive through the winter months as it goes into dormancy. Once the tree has lost all of its leaves, this signals that it is the appropriate time to perform any necessary pruning as without the leaves on deciduous trees, it is much easier to see the branch structure and make informative cuts. Winter is a low stress time for these trees as they are known to be heat sensitive, providing another great reason for a winter pruning schedule.

## Pruning

It is important to get in and prune Deciduous trees during the cooler months as branch patterns are more visible and the trees themselves develop healthier growth in the Spring when they put on new leaves. While it is recommended to prune any tree that seems to need it, it is important to be careful in your pruning choices and keep in mind that there are only a few valid reasons to prune; to prevent hazards, promote health of the tree, and increase or decrease the amount of leaves, flowers, and fruits.

Pruning should be done prior to the buds showing evidence of any swelling and should never exceed more than 25-30% of the canopy of the tree in any given year.

When pruning, it is important to stay outside of the branch collar. This will ensure that the wound from the cut heals naturally and correctly.

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Finally, it is important to realize that pruning always results in wounds to the tree that can cause various responses such as an increase in sprouting and susceptibility to disease and insect problems, so it is of the utmost importance that pruning is done professionally and appropriately.



Properly Maintained Trees by ELS

ELS Maintenance has an entire division dedicated to Arbor care that specializes in keeping trees maintained and healthy! Learn more about our Arbor Division and what they can do for your HOA community or Commercial Property at [www.elslandscapeaz.com](http://www.elslandscapeaz.com).