

When is The Best Time To Prune a Pine Tree

Generally speaking, the excurrent growth habit of pine trees requires very little pruning except to remove branches that are dead, diseased, hazardous, or have excessive end weight. When pruning is needed, a healthy pine can handle mild pruning any time of the year. But keep in mind that during warmer months sap from pruning cuts may drop on landscaping and outdoor seating. Pruning during cooler months, when the tree is less active and sap flow is reduced can mitigate this problem. Some other considerations:



Integrity Tree Service, Inc.
Chris Geldis - ISA Certified Arborist WE-12162A

Heat stress. Although several species of pine have proven their xeric mettle against our extreme summer climate, even well-adapted native trees can struggle to maintain healthy transpirational moisture flows during peak summer. Subsequent heat stress can restrict the vitality of a tree and compromise its defenses against parasites and pathogens.

Frost. Late fall pruning may pose a problem by promoting new bud growth. Until maturing into more robust shoots and branches these tender buds represent a net "sink" as opposed to "source" of energy for the tree. The carbohydrates invested in new bud-breaks will be wasted if they are destroyed in a winter frost. Wasted energy, once again, restricts a tree's vitality and can leave it vulnerable infestation and infection.

For these reasons I recommend pruning pine trees in the spring after the last frost of the year: the sap is viscous and reduced, temperatures are too cool for heat stress, and any new growth responses to pruning will more likely benefit the tree's metabolism.