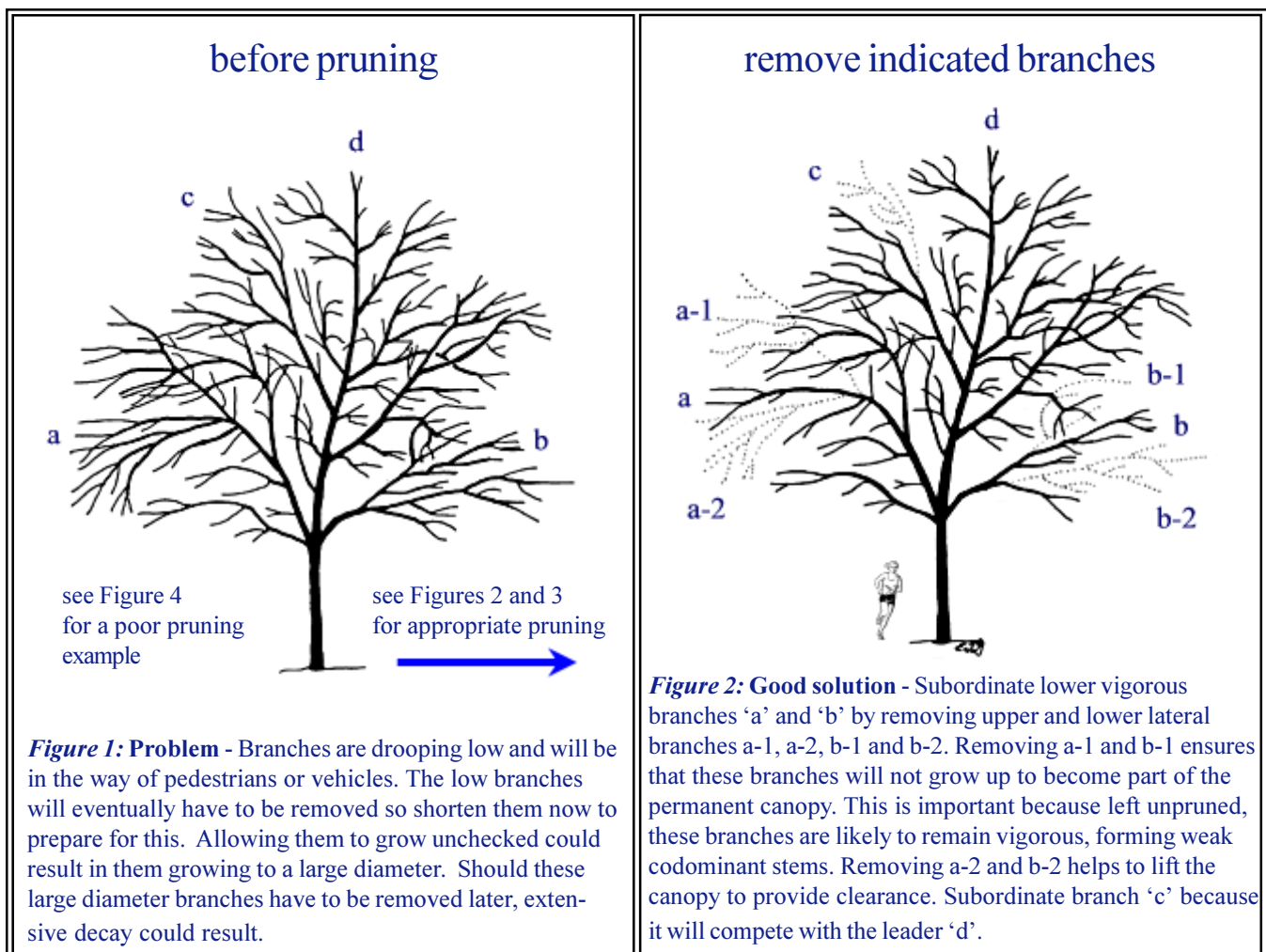


Raising or lifting the canopy

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Introduction: Large, low branches are fine for trees growing in parks and other open landscapes where passage under the canopy is not needed. However, in more urban settings low branches may be undesirable on established trees because they obstruct vision and may interfere with pedestrian and vehicular traffic. A large wound and possible trunk defects could result should they have to be removed. Low branches on young trees that are allowed to develop can become more problematic with time as they droop and get in the way.

Canopy lifting or raising should be performed on young and medium-aged trees to prevent low branches from growing to a large diameter. Crown lifting shortens low branches regularly to suppress their growth. This forces more growth in the upper branches. This form is most suitable for urban landscapes. The shortened branches are later removed to raise the crown for under clearance. This sustainable technique damages the tree less than allowing low branches to grow to a large size and then deciding to remove them. Keeping low branches small will also increase the value of the lower trunk should the tree be cut into lumber when it is removed.



Objectives: 1) Keep low branches small with regular reduction cuts so that trunk wounds are small when branches are eventually removed. 2) Prevent low branches from growing up into the canopy by reducing or removing upright-growing stems and branches.

Execution: Instead of removing large low branches all at once, slow their growth by reducing their length if they will need to be removed later. Compared to removing the entire branch back to the trunk now, reduction of their length 1) is more attractive, 2) minimizes the size of the trunk wound when the low branches are eventually removed, and 3) helps prevent decay and cracks from entering the trunk.

