

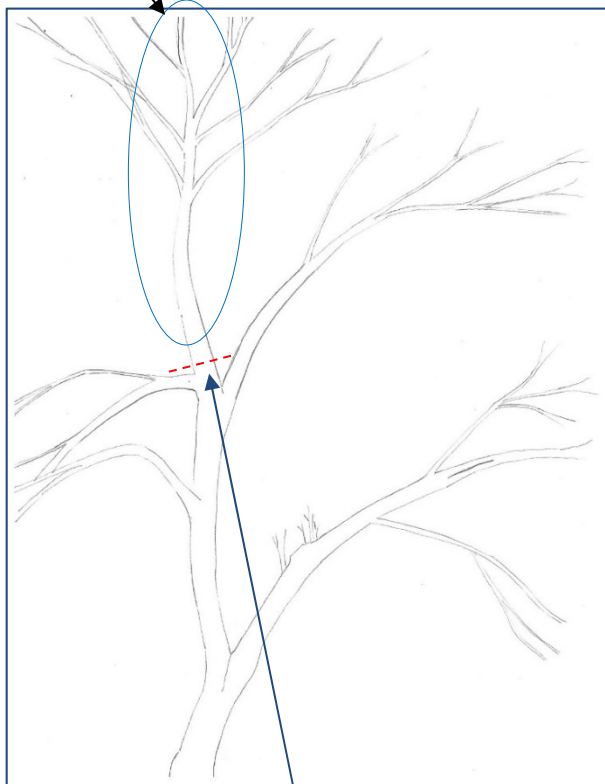
## Continuation from the Fall Newsletter: Pruning Wild Apple Trees with Bruce Robinson



This tree is much older and larger than the one portrayed in the first example (Fall Newsletter). Larger trees generally require more work to correct problems and redistribute the shape of the crown as desired. Multiple rejuvenation pruning treatments are needed for this tree, and it will take several years to complete. Ideally, pruning to correct problems should be started when the tree is younger and smaller.

Bruce started his instruction by pointing-out the tree had directed more growth in the vertical direction than is desirable. His recommendation was to remove the tall vertical leader. This would return emphasis to horizontal structure and open light to the central portion of crown.

Tall vertical leader. This portion of stem doubles the height of the tree.



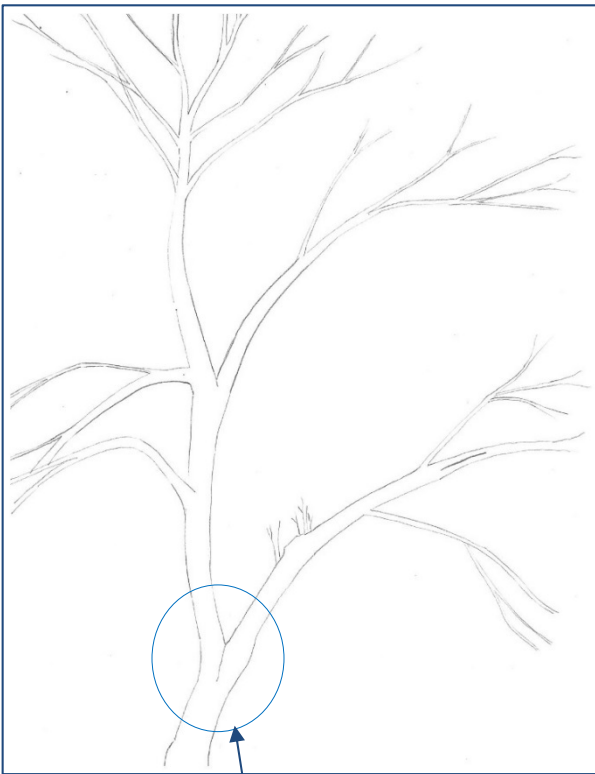
The final removal cut was made just above the union with a lateral branch.

For information regarding the proper placement and process of pruning cuts see the following guide: [How to Prune a Tree](http://na.fs.fed.us/) PDF is available on the Forest Service website <http://na.fs.fed.us/>



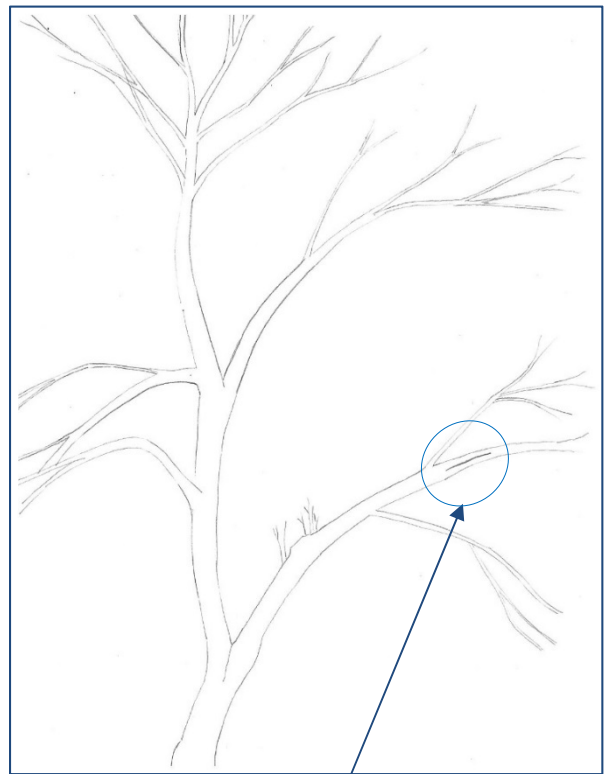
A single removal cut has completely changed the crown structure. It almost looks like a different tree. Sunlight will now more easily reach the central portion of the crown. A flush of new growth in this area is a likely response. The crown will fill-out and the 'flat-top' look will begin to fade next growing season.

There is more work to do on this tree (See Next Page) but this initial cut removed a large portion of the crown. It is not advised to remove more than 30% of the crown during a single pruning (less is preferable).



This narrow union has a vertical seam indicating structural vulnerability.

A heavy load on either side of crown may cause the seam to split and one side or the other to tear-off



Bruce points to a stress crack that runs parallel the length of branch. This is a structural concern and potential entry point for wood decay fungi

Bruce suggests that future pruning work might focus on reducing the right side of the crown. Removing the entire right-side leader isn't necessary. Complete removal would reduce the tree's ability to produce and store energy. The loss of so much crown would likely cause a great deal of stress on the tree. However, leaving the entire right-side of the crown keeps the weak union (at the fork) vulnerable to the potential of heavy loading forces from wind, snow, and ice. Pruning to reduce weight and crown surface area will minimize potential for structural failure. Structural failure at large unions usually leads to the formation of large cavities and the eventual breakage and loss of everything above the cavity. Work on the right-side of the crown must wait for a season or two so the tree can recover and adjust to the pruning work just completed on the left-side of the crown. Bruce also points-out that the tree's response to this season's pruning will help guide subsequent treatments.