



## Pruning techniques for agroforestry systems: timber

[www.eurafagroforestry.eu/afinet/](http://www.eurafagroforestry.eu/afinet/)

Trees grown commercially for timber production are usually planted close together to encourage them to grow straight and upwards and reduce side branching, they are then thinned out to encourage the tree to increase their diameter.

In agroforestry systems with wider spaced trees, if timber is the objective, then the trees must be pruned regularly once established from 2-3 years after planting, in order to improve the trees shape and produce high quality timber.

In addition to increasing the marketable value of the timber pruning is needed to improve the ability of the tree to withstand wind, to remove any dead or diseased material and to allow access under the crown for agricultural operations.

Shape pruning is carried out in the first 10-25 years of a trees life in order to select a single straight trunk as well as to give the tree mechanical stability against winds, pruning consists of removing forks, multiple or broken top branches.

Shape pruning is necessary until the main stem, or bole, has reached it's target height. Pruning is best carried out gradually and should not remove more than 30% of the tree branches each year.

Silvicultural pruning starts a few years after shape pruning once the tree is c.3-4m tall and aims to remove lower branches to reduce the presence of knots in the bole, it should be carried out regularly before branches reach 3-4cm in diameter.



Figure 1. Tree pruning

### References:

Shaping the trees. Agforward best practice leaflet 10 ([www.agforward.eu](http://www.agforward.eu))

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