

There are two types of weeping trees and shrubs: natural and grafted.

Natural

If a tree or shrub is naturally weeping, the growth habit is vertical with branches arching at a height that varies as the plant grows. On naturally weeping trees and shrubs, *do not remove branches growing upward*. Eventually, they will arch over and increase the height of the tree. To gain height in naturally weeping trees, stake the tree when it is young. Select a main leader and pull it upright, tying it to a stake. Keep the stake in place until the tree has reached the desired height. This growth pattern produces a tiered effect.

Grafted

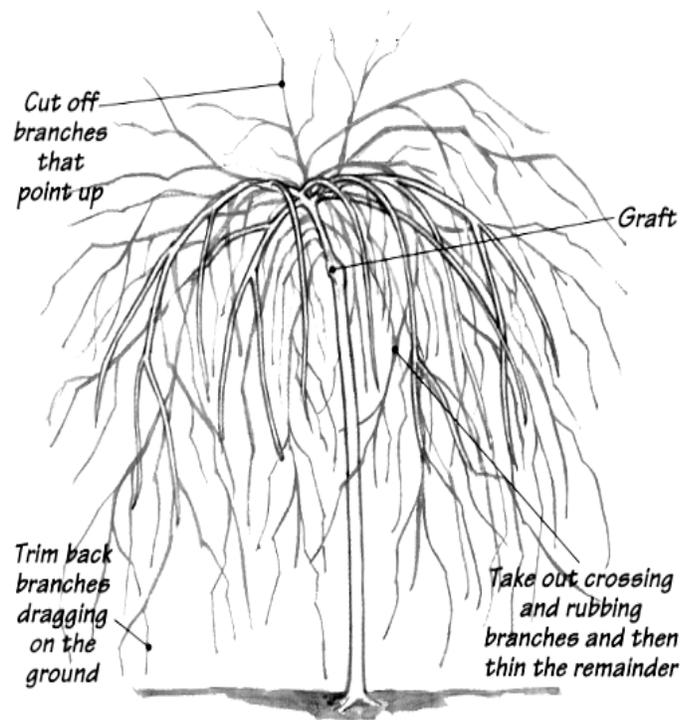
Many weeping trees and shrubs are grafted plants. Grafted plants are created by permanently joining a branch taken from one plant with another plant that bears roots. This union usually creates a visible swelling or knot. Grafts can only be made between closely related species of plants. For example, the Weeping Blue Artic Willow (*Salix purpurea* 'Pendula') is commonly grafted on to a stock of the ordinary Purpleosier Willow (*Salix purpurea*). On most top-grafted trees and shrubs, upward growth will spoil the weeping effect and it should be removed. However, never cut into or below the graft union.

Thinning the Crown

Over time, the head of a weeping tree or shrub often forms a very dense tangle of branches just above the graft union. This dense tangle of branches can cause the tree or shrub to become top-heavy and more prone to damage in high winds, heavy snow or ice.

To create a more open head, the crown must be thinned. This is most easily done when the tree or shrub is dormant and the structure of the tree can be seen. Here are the steps.

1. First, trim the tips of any branches that drag on the ground.
2. Then begin removing any upward growing branches and any branches that are crossing or rubbing. Remove smaller branches first, working up to larger branches.
3. Prune carefully and continually check the shape of the crown. The crown should be balanced around the tree.



Air Circulation

Weeping trees and shrubs should also be pruned to allow good air circulation. Near the top of the plant, branches should be spaced approximately 2 inches apart. With proper branch spacing, the wind will filter through the tree or shrub instead of pushing against it.

Clearing Lateral Growth

Keep the trunk of any weeping tree or shrub clear of any lateral growth. This can be accomplished by using your fingers to pinch or rub any new growth as it appears.

Staking

Weeping trees and shrubs often require staking for some years after planting. These plants are fast growing, often causing the head or crown to develop rapidly. Staking with a tall, strong stake will help support the crown until the trunk has increased considerably in girth.

Weeping Trees and Shrubs Available in the Kansas City Area

Common Name	Scientific Name
Crimson Cascade Weeping Peach	<i>Prunus persica</i> 'Crimson Cascade'
Fullmoon Maple	<i>Acer japonicum</i> 'Green Cascade'
Japanese Maples	<i>Acer palmatum dissectum</i> 'Garnet', 'Virdis' or 'Green Lace', 'Inabe Shidare', 'Red Dragon', 'Omurayama', 'Waterfall'
Lavender Twist Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'Lavender Twist'
Purple Weeping Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Purpurea Pendula'
Red Jade Crabapple	<i>Malus</i> 'Red Jade'
Weeping Blue Artic Willow	<i>Salix purpurea</i> 'Pendula'
Weeping Cherry	<i>Prunus subhirtella</i> var. <i>pendula</i>
Weeping European Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i> 'Pendula'
Weeping Pussy Willow	<i>Sallix purpurea</i> 'Pendula'
Weeping Siberian Pea Shrub	<i>Caragana arborescens</i> 'Pendula'
Weeping Mulberry	<i>Morus alba</i> 'Chaparral'
White Cascade Crabapple	<i>Malus</i> 'Cascade'
Young's Weeping Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i> 'Youngii'

Works Cited

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