



PROPER TREE PRUNING



Prune for **STRENGTH** by removing:

- Co-dominant leaders or multiple trunks to encourage the growth of one main trunk
- Injured, diseased and dead branches
- Rubbing branches

Prune for **FORM** by removing:

- Excess lateral branches to produce a ladder effect at maturity
- Water sprouts and root suckers
- Limbs that turn inward, cross or extend

Because trees are vital to our communities' environmental health, they are protected by ordinance under Broward County Code Chapter 27 Article XIV "Tree Preservation and Abuse Ordinance" 27-491 - 27-420 (www.broward.org/files/00112.pdf). This ordinance sets minimum standards for tree pruning and tree restrictions on tree removal. Broward County also requires that professional tree trimmer companies be licensed under Chapter 9 Article IX. This ordinance requires that tree trimmers have a minimum level of training in tree care and show proof of workers' compensation insurance, and notification that workers are trained on required OSHA safety regulations. For more information about the licensing of tree trimmers contact the Broward County Building Code Services Division Licensing Section at 954-765-4996, ext. 244 or visit www.broward.org/agriculture/english/forest/00100010001.htm.

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This public document was photocopied at a cost of \$1055.00, or \$187 per copy to inform the public about proper tree pruning.

If you require auxiliary aids for communication, please call our office at 954-519-1230 (voice) or 954-357-8158 (TTY).

This public document can be made available in large print, tape cassette or Braille, by request.

Printed on recycled paper.

Proper Tree Pruning

Pruning of tree limbs on a regularly scheduled basis will improve tree health, control growth, and enhance fruiting, flowering and appearance.

Trees should be pruned for the first time 2 to 5 years after planting, then every 5 to 7 years thereafter. Pruning is best done from winter to early spring (before new growth starts) because wounds close quickly as growth starts in the spring and insect and disease infestations are less likely.

Step back and look at the tree to be pruned. Try to imagine what it will look like when it is going to be larger, and remember that tree limbs will increase in diameter and lengthen but will not move upward on the trunk as the tree grows.



Proper pruning cuts

In order to make a proper pruning cut, you must first locate the branch collar.

The branch collar is an extension of the main stem of the tree where the branch joins the main trunk. Cutting into the branch collar allows decay to expand into the main trunk of the tree.

- Always make pruning cuts on the outside of the branch collar
- Do not leave branch stubs, living or dead
- Use sharp hand tools designed for pruning and wear safety equipment
- Do not paint wounds with pruning paint. It does not prevent decay and may interfere with wound closure
- Homeowners should never climb a tree to

- prune limbs or attempt to prune limbs near overhead power lines
- Never remove more than 1/4 of the live crown in a single growing season
- Pruning should result in an even distribution of branches in individual limbs and throughout the crown.

Pruning of trees prior to storms and hurricanes

Prune for strength and form (see back cover).

Topping a large tree causes excessive sprouting of weakly attached new branches, and also increases wind resistance by creating denser branching patterns. Excessive lifting creates a condition where trees become top-heavy. Both of these methods of pruning increase the chances of wind damage in the long run.

Topping/Hatracking

Topping is a type of pruning where most of the canopy is removed from a tree, leaving mostly branch stubs. Topping initiates decay in the trunk and main branches and attracts wood boring insects. Never top a tree or allow anyone to top one of your trees. Tipping is equivalent to hunchering a tree. Competent arborists do not top trees.

Tipping is a violation of Broward County ordinance!

Excessive Lifting

Lifting trees is a common pruning practice where the lower branches of the tree are removed to provide clearance for cars, structures, etc. Over lifting, or excessive thinning of trees, is a poor pruning practice. This type of pruning causes trees to be top-heavy, reduces trunk taper and increases chances of branch breakage. It also disfigures the natural form of the tree.

Over lifting of trees is a violation of Broward County ordinance!



Topping



Lifting

Choosing a Tree Service/Arborist

Homeowners who rush to accept the service of a "tree expert" are frequently taken advantage of by fly-by-night amateurs with a pickup truck and chainsaw. The result of this is poor quality work, and greater long term costs.

The best option is to choose a tree care professional. The arborist (tree care professional) you will want to hire should:

- have a valid Broward County Tree Trimmer's License
- have an occupational license and a bonafide business in the community
- be listed in the telephone directory "yellow pages" commonly under tree service
- be fully insured for property damage, personal liability and worker compensation
- and be a member of a professional association such as the National Arborist Association, the Florida Arborist Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, or the American Society of Consulting Arborists.



PROPER PRUNING PRINCIPLES