

## Proper Tree Pruning

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

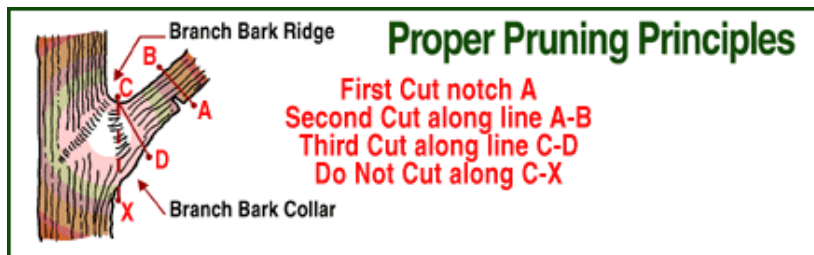
Step back and look at the tree to be pruned. Try to imagine what it will look like when it is going to be larger, and remember that tree limbs will increase in diameter and lengthen but will not move upward on the trunk as the tree grows.

## 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 wound paint. It does not prevent decay and may interfere with proper wound closure.
- Homeowners should never climb a tree to prune limbs or attempt to prune limbs near overhead powerlines.
- Never remove more than 1/3 of the live crown in a single pruning.



## Pruning of trees prior to storms and hurricanes

Prune for strength and form. 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.

### Prune for strength by removing:

- Co-dominant leaders and multi-trunks to encourage the growth of one main single "central" leader.
- Injured, diseased and dead branches.
- Rubbing branches.

### Prune for form by removing:

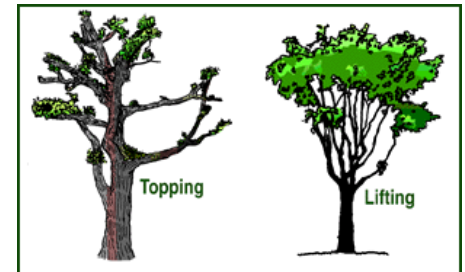
- Excess lateral branches to produce a ladder effect at maturity.
- Water sprouts and root suckers.
- Limbs that turn inward, cross or extend.



## Topping/Hat Racking

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. Topping is equivalent to butchering a tree. Competent arborists do not top trees.

*Topping is considered tree abuse and is a violation of Article Fourteen Broward County Code.*



## Excessive Lifting

Excessive lifting is a common pruning practice wherein all 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 the chances of branch failure. It also disfigures the natural form of the trees.

*Over lifting of trees is considered tree abuse and is a violation of Article Fourteen Broward County Code.*

## 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 who commonly consist of 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 Broward County Licensed tree care professional. The arborist (tree care professional) you will want to hire should:

- Have a [Broward County Tree Trimmer License](#), have an occupational license and as a bonafide business in the community should be listed in the telephone directory "Yellow Pages" commonly under tree service/arborist.
- Be fully insured for property damage, personal liability and worker's compensation.
- Be a member of a professional association such as the [National Arborist Association](#), the [Florida Urban Forestry Council](#), the [International Society of Arboriculture](#), or the [American Society of Consulting Arborists](#).

## Broward County Tree Trimmer Licensing Ordinance

Recently, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners adopted an ordinance regulating the tree trimming industry. This action was taken as a result of concerns about the quality of tree trimming practiced in Broward County, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public. All businesses or governmental agencies that perform tree trimming in Broward County are required to obtain a [Broward County Tree Trimmer License](#).

- To report unlicensed Tree Trimmers please contact the Broward County Permitting, Licensing and Consumer Protection Division at (954) 765-4400 Opt. 2

[Tree Preservation Program](#)