

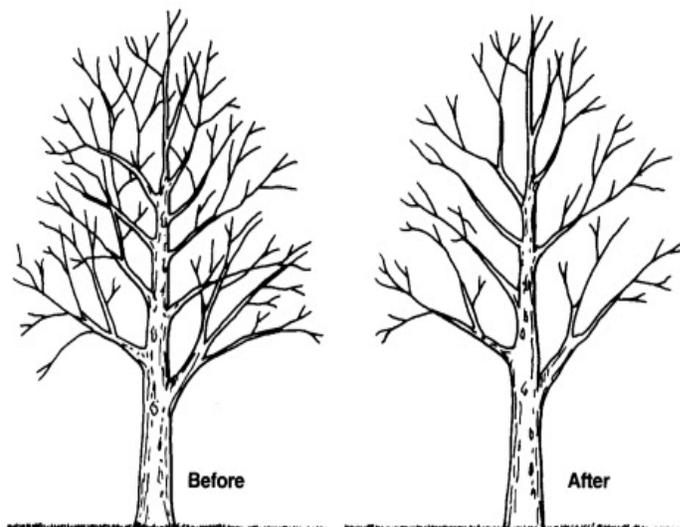
Tree Pruning

Why Prune Trees?

- Safety
 - Properly pruned trees are stronger
 - Protect property
- Tree Health
 - Healthy trees are are less prone to disease and breakage
- Aesthetics
 - Help preserve property values
- Encroachment
 - Maintain trees away from private property

Tree Pruning Frequency

- How often a tree is pruned depends on the following factors:
 - Species
 - Age
 - Location
 - Preference

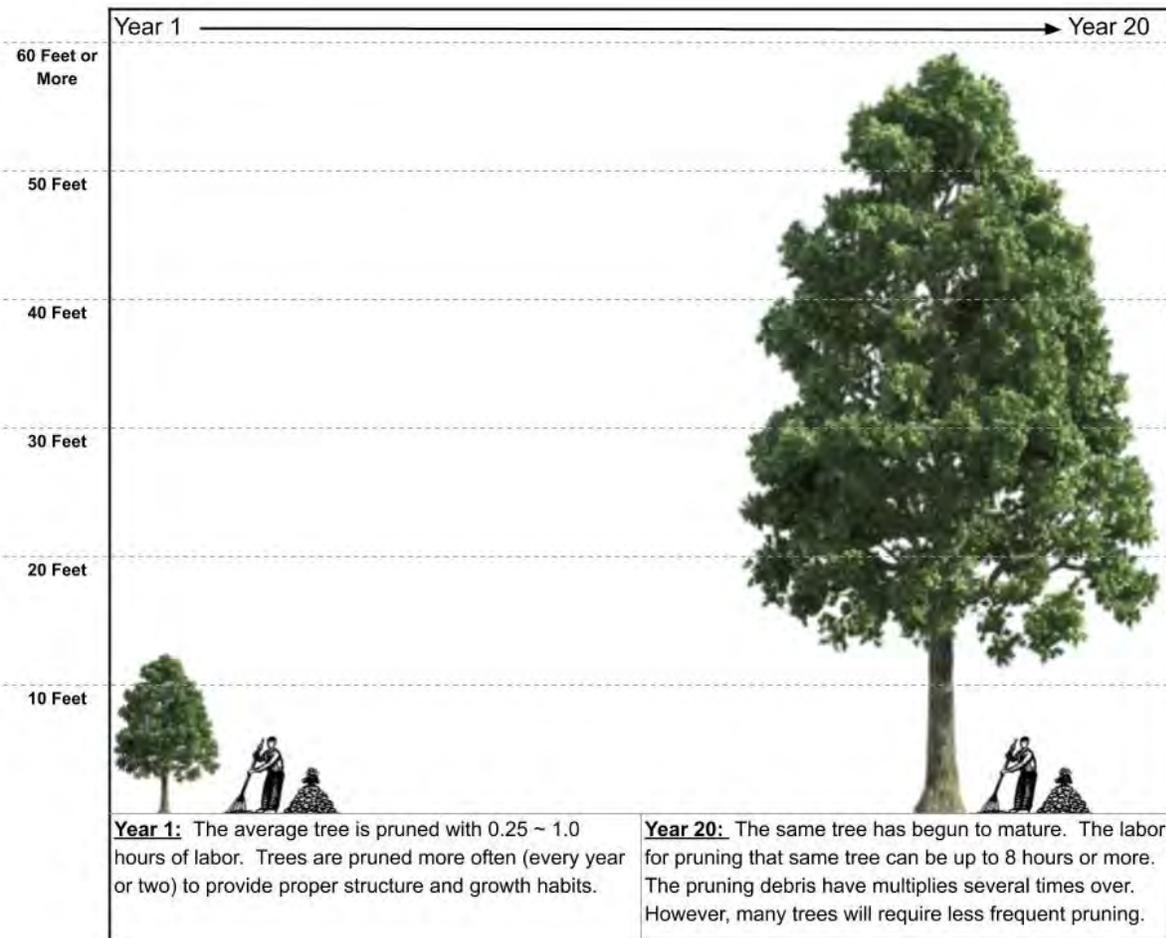


Tree Timeline

And the evolving labor requirements

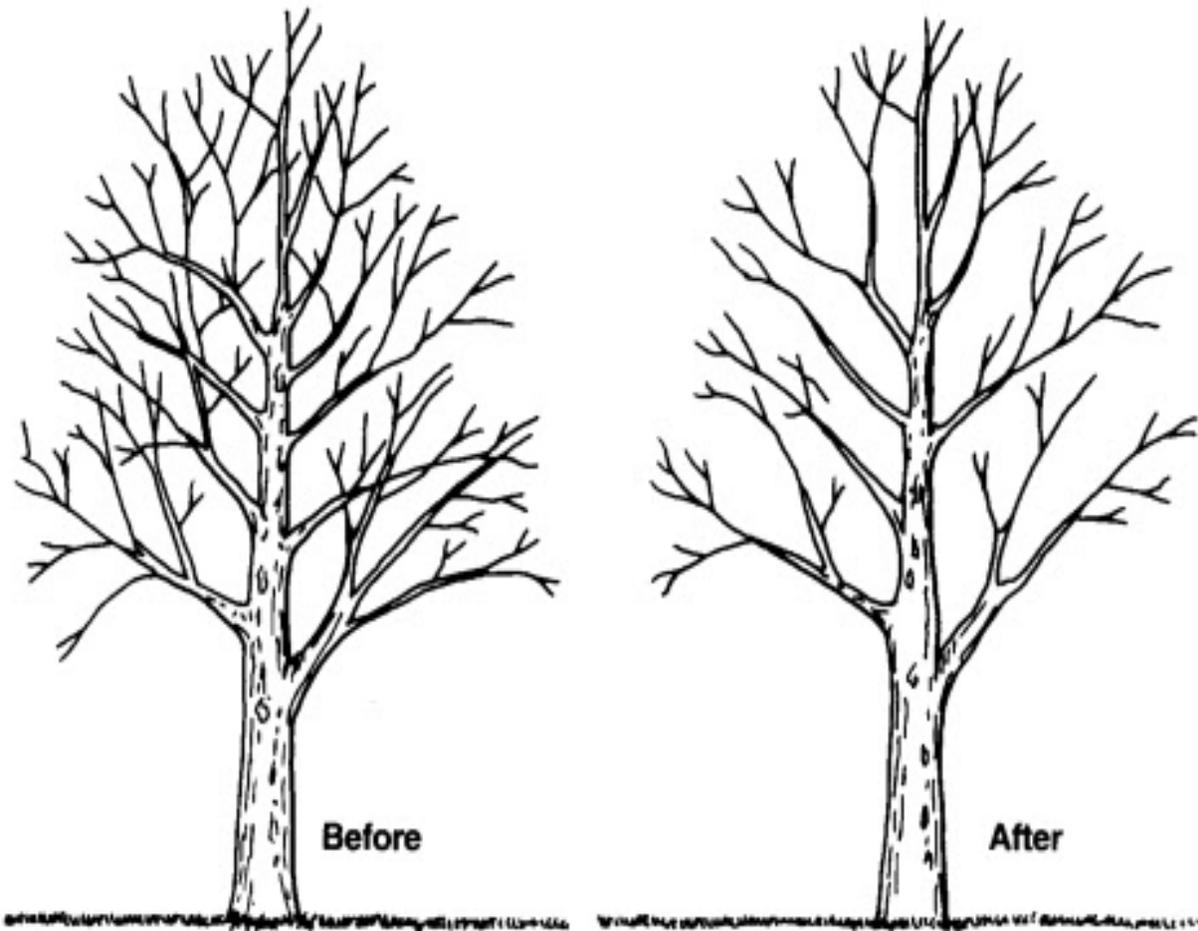
As the trees in Ladera mature, they often grow exponentially. Some species will not fully mature for 50 or more years.

Over the years, both the labor required for pruning and the debris generated grow exponentially also. A tree that requires 1 hour of labor or less in year 1, could require 8 hours of labor, or many more, in year 20. All tree pruning operations schedules are continuously revised to reflect the needs of the urban forest as it matures



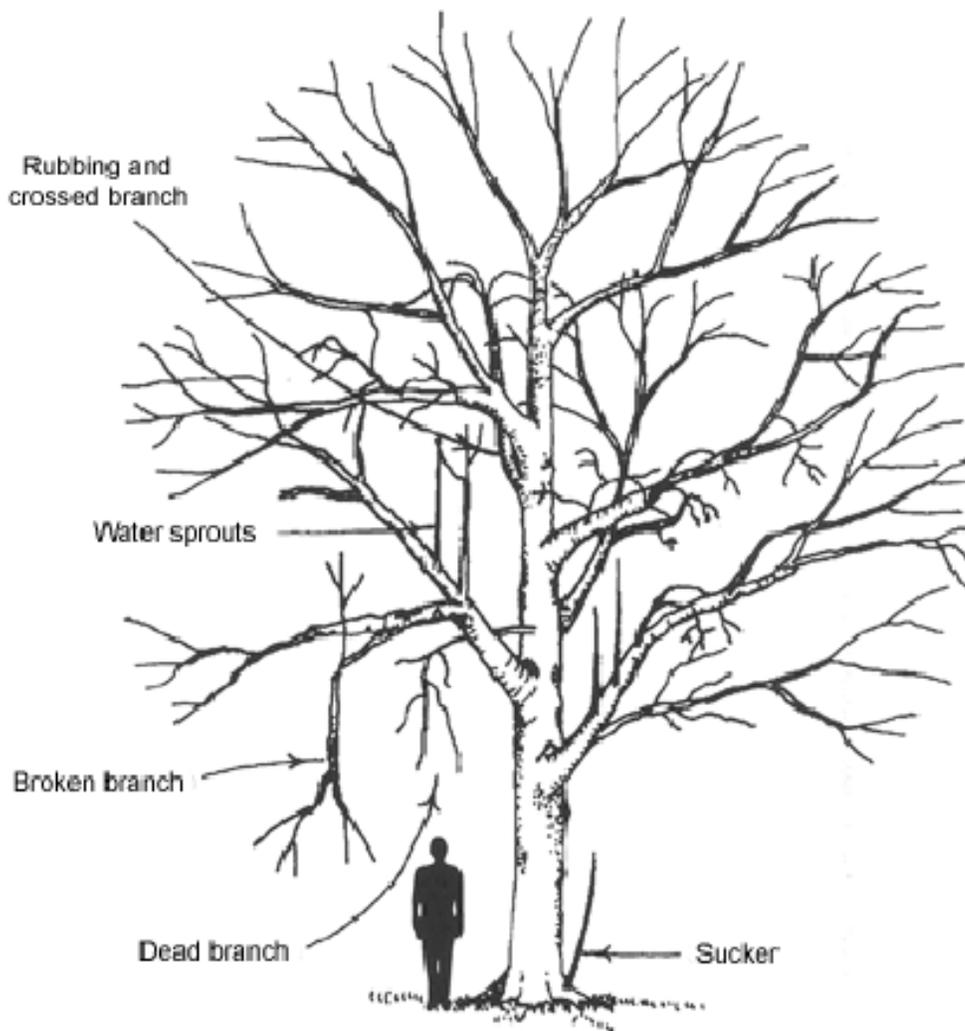
Properly Pruned Tree

Note that the overall size of the tree has not been reduced.



Basic Pruning Tasks

Illustrated here are a few of the conditions a skilled tree worker will address while pruning a tree.



Topping vs. Pruning

As a rule, trees are never topped. A common misconception is that by topping a tree it will require pruning less often.

Topping is also known as:

- Stubbing
- Heading
- Tipping
- Hat Racking
- Dehorning
- Lopping
- Roundover

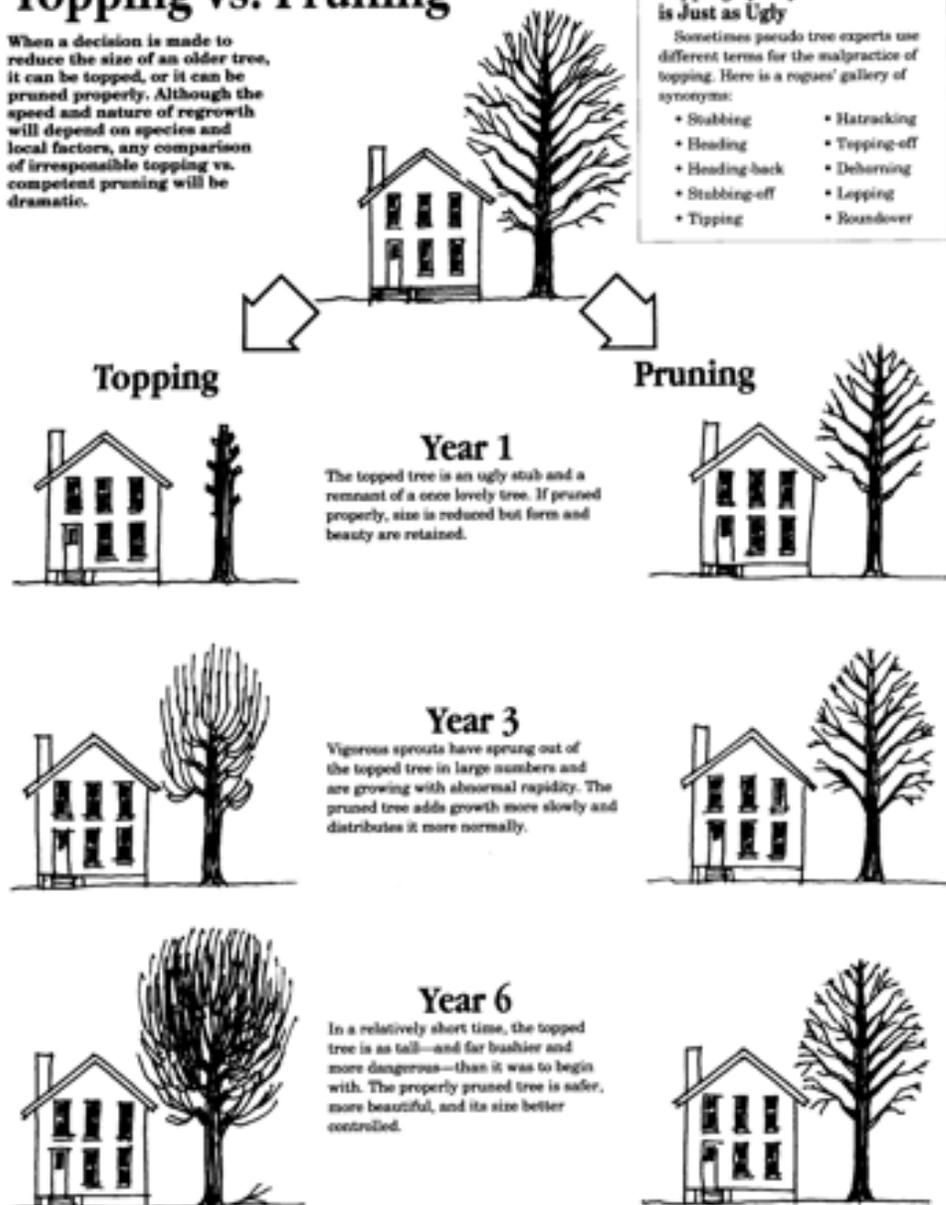
Topping vs. Pruning

When a decision is made to reduce the size of an older tree, it can be topped, or it can be pruned properly. Although the speed and nature of regrowth will depend on species and local factors, any comparison of irresponsible topping vs. competent pruning will be dramatic.

Topping by Any Other Name is Just as Ugly

Sometimes pseudo tree experts use different terms for the malpractice of topping. Here is a rogues' gallery of synonyms:

- Stubbing
- Hatracking
- Heading
- Topping-off
- Heading back
- Dehorning
- Stubbing-off
- Lopping
- Tipping
- Roundover



Don't Top Trees!

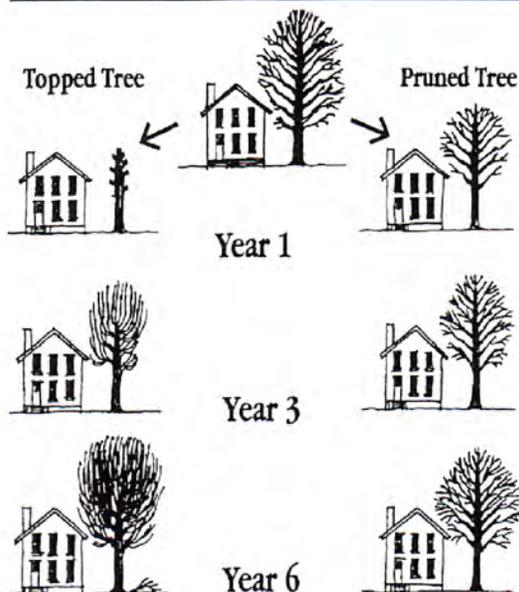
Never cut main branches back to stubs. The sight of topped trees is all too common in the communities and along the roadways of America—trunks with stubby limbs standing naked in the landscape, trees stripped of all dignity and grace. Trees are often topped because they grow into utility wires, interfere with views or solar collectors, or simply grow so large that they worry the landowner. But, as one arborist has said, "Topping is the absolute worst thing you can do for the health of your tree."



TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN

Why NOT to "Top:" 8 Good Reasons

1. **Starvation:** Topping removes so much of the tree's leafy crown that it dangerously reduces the tree's food-making ability.
2. **Shock:** By removing the protective cover of the tree's canopy, bark tissue is exposed to the direct rays of the sun. The resultant scalding can cause the tree's death.
3. **Insects and Disease:** The exposed ends of topped limbs are highly vulnerable to insect invasion or decay fungi spores.
4. **Weak Limbs:** New branches that grow from a stubbed limb are weakly attached and more liable to break from snow or ice weight.
5. **Rapid New Growth:** Instead of controlling the height and spread of the tree, topping has the opposite effect. New branches are more numerous and often grow higher than before.
6. **Tree Death:** Some tree species can't tolerate major branch loss and still survive. At best, they remain weak and disease-prone.
7. **Ugliness:** A topped tree is a disfigured tree. Even with new growth it never regains the grace and character of its species.
8. **Cost:** The true cost of topping is often hidden — lower property values, expense of removal and replacement if the tree dies.



Proper Pruning — The Alternative to Topping

When a decision is made to reduce the size of an older tree, it can be topped, or it can be pruned properly. Although the speed and nature of regrowth will depend on species and local factors, any comparison between irresponsible topping and competent pruning will be dramatic.

- **Year 1:**
The topped tree is an ugly stub and a remnant of a once lovely tree. If pruned properly, the tree's size is reduced but form and beauty are retained.
- **Year 3:**
Vigorous sprouts have sprung out of the topped tree in large numbers and are growing with abnormal rapidity. The pruned tree adds growth, but it does so more slowly and distributes it more normally.
- **Year 6:**
In a relatively short time, the topped tree is as tall — and far bushier and more dangerous — than it was to begin with. The properly pruned tree is safer, more beautiful, and its size is better controlled.

This is taken from *Tree City USA Bulletin No. 8, "Don't Top Trees!"* For a free copy of the complete Bulletin, write to: The National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City NE 68410.

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Topped Trees - Worst Case Scenario

Examples of why not to top trees

