



STOP TOPPING TREES

With Communities in Bloom gearing up for another season in most towns in Mountain View County, we would like to encourage people to keep their yards tidy and beautiful but more importantly, to look after their trees. Trees are the first things judges and visitors see. Trees are, by definition, high profile. So remember: Topless trees are indecent! If you do not know how to prune properly, ASK questions. Keep our trees looking beautiful in Mountain View County!

Why topping hurts trees

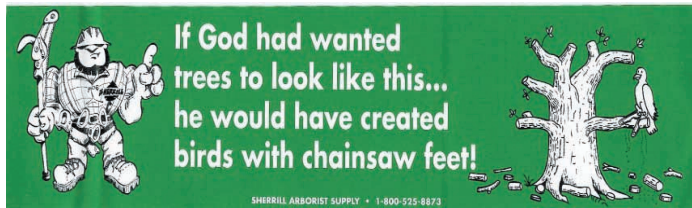
Topping causes a great amount of stress to a live tree. Removing 50-100% of the crown starves the tree. When a tree is topped it will activate latent buds, forcing rapid growth of multiple shoots below each cut. It does this because when the top is cut off, the branches that would normally produce leaves (the food factory of the tree), are no longer there. Rapidly growing shoots are produced because new leaves need to form. If the tree does not have the stored up energy reserves to do this, it will kill the tree. When a tree is stressed it is more vulnerable to insects and diseases. Very similar to a person who is sick and their immune system is low. Most insects are actually attracted to stressed trees by chemical signals. Topping a tree causes decay. When a pruning cut is made correctly the tree is biologically able to close that wound. If the wound is too large or not made properly it exposes an opening for decay, which will move down through the branches and rot out the rest of the tree.

Did you know topping could lead to sunburn?

The trees leaves are produced to absorb sunlight. When a tree is topped and branches and leaves are removed the remaining branches and trunk are exposed to high levels of light and heat. The result may be sunburn of tissues beneath the bark. This leads to cankers, bark splitting and the death of some branches.

Topping is Expensive

Topping is high maintenance. When a tree is topped its natural shape is permanently altered. Storm damage is inevitable when wind and snow easily break the flimsy new shoots from a topping cut after just a few years. More topping or proper pruning or removals are the only possible outcomes from topping. The longer a larger topped tree remains standing the more hazardous it becomes due to internal decay. Topping has the opposite effect if the goal was to make the tree safer and topping is much more expensive in the long run.



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Alternatives

A trees height or spread may need to be reduced for clearances if utility lines are above. It is important when planting a tree that the correct space is given for it. Ask a Certified Arborist if your tree can be saved if it has been topped in the past, talk to a Certified Arborist before someone else tops your tree.

ASK QUESTIONS FIRST