

PROPER TREE PRUNING PRACTICES

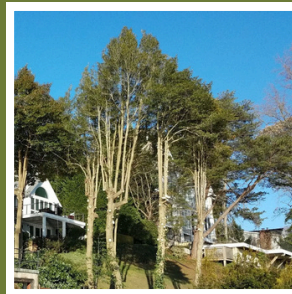


Pruning is the selective removal of plant parts to meet specific goals and objectives. Pruning can be performed to improve the health of the trees or shrubs, to remove dead branches, and to reduce potential hazards. Correct pruning of a tree can enhance tree health, while improper pruning can harm tree health.

PROHIBITED PRUNING PRACTICES



Topping



Lions-Tailing



Excessive Elevation Pruning



Excessive Crown or Limb Removal

WHEN DO I NEED A PERMIT FOR PRUNING?



Within 100ft Critical Area Buffer and expanded buffer



When Pruning more than 2,500sqft in a Forest Conservation Easement, and/or on steep slopes in the Critical Area



Within Stream, Wetland, and Bog Protection Areas

WHAT PERMIT DO I NEED?

Vegetation Management Plan



For pruning, removing dead trees, and managing invasive plants in areas less than 5,000sqft.

Habitat Enhancement Plan



For habitat enhancement projects, non-commercial timber stand improvement, and invasive plant management in areas greater than 5,000sqft but less than 1 acre.



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY MARYLAND

Still have questions? Contact us:



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PROPER AND IMPROPER TREE PRUNING PRACTICE

PROHIBITED PRUNING PRACTICES: TOPPING TREES



Topping is a harmful tree pruning practice and increases the risk of tree failure, soil erosion, and other hazards. This practice can remove up to 50% of the tree's leaves and makes large open wounds vulnerable to decay, disease, and insect infestation. The new shoots grow quickly and are weakly attached in the outer layers of the branches.

Trees that have been topped repeatedly form a thick layer of shoot growth at the topping cut that shades the soil. This prevents the natural growth of understory trees and shrubs. The bare soil washes out during rain events, damaging slopes and increasing erosion hazard beneath the topped trees.

Topping cannot be approved on a VMP or HEP application. Topping trees is not approved by ANSI A300 Standards and will result in Code Compliance violations and fines.

TOPPING VS. POLLARDING

Topping

Topping cuts are made indiscriminately on a branch without regard for tree health or structural integrity using "heading" cuts (cuts that are made between branches, leaving a stub).

This practice can remove up to 50% of the tree's leaves and makes large, open wounds. Indiscriminate cuts damage and weaken the tree. Weakened trees are more likely to become hazardous.



Pollarding

Pollarding is a multi-year pruning system that maintains crown size by initial heading of branches on young trees or young portions of older trees, followed by removal of sprouts to their point of origin without disturbing the resulting pollard head.

A true pollard involves cutting shoots no larger than 4" diameter that result from an original header cut back to a branch knuckle to reduce cut size. These cuts should be made every two to three years.



WHAT CAN BE APPROVED?

Topping trees is not approved by Anne Arundel County Code and is subject to Code Compliance violations and fines.

Implementation of a pollarding system **may** be approved with prior coordination with Forestry staff.

For additional guidance, please contact Forestry by email at Forestry@aacounty.org