

Six Good Reasons Not to Top Trees

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The Morton Arboretum

June 13, 2002

1. **Starvation-** Topping is a practice where the tree's crown to root ratio is so dramatically upset it cuts off the tree's food making ability. Proper pruning practices rarely remove more than 1/4 to 1/3 of the crown, which does not interfere with the tree's ability to manufacture food.
2. **Shock-** A tree protects itself from direct sunlight by forming a crown or "umbrella." By removing this natural protection, the remaining tissues are exposed and scalding may result. Also, there may be an effect on nearby plants that were comfortable in the tree's shade.
3. **Diseases/Insects-** Large and disfigured limbs of a topped tree have a hard time forming natural defenses and callus. These open wounds are extremely vulnerable to insects and disease.
4. **Weak Limbs-** The wood of a sprout that forms after topping a tree is weakly attached. This wood forms at a faster rate than normal, and weight is added rapidly. This compounding situation can easily lead to the splitting of limbs from the tree.
5. **Unsightly/Death-** Topped trees are disfigured trees. Major unwanted pruning can significantly reduce a tree's life expectancy. A tree never fully recovers from the shock and vulnerability of being topped. The community and the natural landscape are being robbed of beauty and value.
6. **Cost-** While applying proper pruning practices takes more time and skill than a worker who wields a saw and wants to save a dollar, in the long run it will help a tree get along in life and prepare for less maintenance in the future. Topping a tree has hidden costs that may not appear for some time, such as reduced property value, premature death of tree and removal, shock and/or loss of nearby plants which perish, increased future maintenance, and risk of liability from weakened limbs.