

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

TREE/SHRUB PRUNING

(Ac.)
Code 660

DEFINITION

The removal of all or part of selected branches, leaders or roots from trees and shrubs.

PURPOSE

- Improve the appearance of trees or shrubs.
- Improve the quality of wood products.
- Improve the production of plant products, e.g., fruits, branches boughs and tips.
- Reduce fire, storms and/or safety hazards.
- Improve the growth and vigor of understory plants.
- Adjust the foliage and branching density or rooting length for other specific intents, such as wind control, noise abatement, access control, and visual screens and managing competition and coffee shade.
- Improve health and vigor of woody plants e.g. disease, insect and injury management.
- Reduces hazards to the general public and the potential property damage.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on any area with trees or shrubs.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

The pruning and shearing method and timing will match the limitations of the site, soils and

plants and minimize damage to the residual plant bole/stems and limbs. For a high degree of removal of crown foliage, pruning and shearing shall be done in two or more timed intervals to minimize plant stress.

Debris and vegetative material left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose and other management activities.

Ground vegetation and/or conditions must be left in a manner to address erosion and other natural resource concerns to acceptable levels.

Disinfect pruning and shearing tools to minimize the spread of pathogens.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas

Cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, wetlands, streambanks, floodways or other ecologically sensitive areas, and areas of special scenic value will be protected through the proper design of pruning.

CONSIDERATIONS

Pruning and shearing should be timed to minimize disturbance to seasonal wildlife activities.

Review the estimated cost and projected economic benefits of the project before starting a pruning or shearing project.

Branches removed may be used for other products.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](#).

Follow local and state regulations.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Periodically inspect plant condition and do additional pruning if needed.

REFERENCES

A New Tree Biology. Shigo and Trees, Associates; 1986.

Care for Your Trees. Univ. of Illinois, Circular 1059. 1972.

Christmas Trees – A Management Guide. Univ. of Nebraska, EC 76-1741. 1976.

Lateral Pruning. Walnut Notes, North Central Forest Experiment Station. 1988.

Pruning Forest Trees. UMC Forestry Guide No. 5160. 1989.

Shaping Pine Christmas Trees for Quality. UMC Forestry Guide No. 5706. 1972.

Growing Pecans. KSU Horticultural Report MF-1025. Kansas State University. 1992

Pruning by Plowing. Missouri Conservationist. February 1990.