

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

TREE/SHRUB PRUNING

(Acre)
CODE 660



Photo: E.F. Gilman, Prof., Environ. Hort. Dep., IFAS, Univ. Florida

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, e.g., ornamental plants and Christmas trees.
- Improve the quality of wood products.
- Improve the production of plant products, e.g., nuts, fruits, boughs and tips.
- Reduce fire 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 and snow control, noise abatement, access control, and visual screens and managing competition.

- Improve health and vigor of woody plants, e.g., disease, insect and injury management.

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 need to match the limitations of the site, soils, and plants and to minimize damage to the residual bole/stems and limbs. Plan on pruning two or more times on a timed interval

if a high degree of crown foliage or shearing is required. More information on [Tree/Shrub Pruning can be found in Florida Conservation Practice Standard 660 Guidance](#).

Remove debris and vegetative material left on the site after treatment if they present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose and other management activities.

Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice.

Follow the criteria and considerations listed in the Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard [Prescribed Burning, Code 338](#), when burning removed vegetation.

Leave ground vegetation and/or conditions 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.

Impact to cultural resources, wetlands, and Federal and State protected species need to be avoided or minimized to the extent practical during planning, design, and implementation of this conservation practice in accordance with established National and Florida NRCS policy; General Manual (GM) Title 420-Part 401, Title 450-Part 401, and Title 190-Parts 410.22 and 410.26; National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH) FL Supplements to Parts 600.1 and 600.6; National Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook (NCRPH); and The National Environmental Compliance Handbook (NECH).

CONSIDERATIONS

Time pruning and shearing operations 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.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice need to 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.

Specifications minimally need to include:

- Goal(s) of pruning/shearing operation(s)
- Method and timing of pruning/shearing operation(s).
- Plans for management/disposal of debris and other vegetation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Periodically inspect plant condition and take additional actions as necessary, e.g., additional pruning, pest management, nutrient management and forest stand improvement.

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