

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**TREE/SHRUB PRUNING**

(Acre)

**CODE 660**

**DEFINITION**

Removing all or parts of selected branches or leaders from trees and shrubs.

**PURPOSES**

- 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 for other specific intents, such as wind and snow control, noise abatement, access control, and visual screens.
- To harvest for commercial use of forest products resulting from pruning and thinning of trees and shrubs.
- Improve wildlife habitat.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On any area where trees or shrubs should be pruned.

**CRITERIA**

The pruning and shearing method and timing will match the limitations of the site and soils, achieve purposes for the specific tree or shrub species, and be conducted in a safe and efficient manner.

Pruning or shearing will not adversely reduce the growth and vigor of the tree or shrub for the intended purpose.

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.

Comply with applicable laws and regulations including pre-activity permits, permissions, or notifications.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

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

Where disease transmission is a concern, pruning and shearing tools should be disinfected to prevent the spread of pathogens.

Economic analyses are recommended before starting pruning and shearing projects.

To maintain plant growth and sustain vigor, pruning and shearing may be done in two or more timed intervals.

Time pruning and shearing to minimize potential damage to the tree bole and stems.

**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 take corrective actions as necessary, e.g., additional pruning, pest management, nutrient management, and forest stand improvement.