

TREE/SHRUB PRUNING

N. C. Practice Job Sheet 660

Prepared for: _____

Prepared by: _____

Farm: _____ Tract: _____ Date: _____



Pruning and shearing increases the value of Christmas trees.

DEFINITION

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

Note: Pruning is removal of undesirable wood older than a year, such as diseased, dead, or damaged wood or forks. Shearing is cutting back the current year's growth of the leader and the laterals.

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 wind and snow control, noise abatement, access control, and visual screens.

CRITERIA

The pruning and shearing method and timing should achieve the purposes for the specific tree or shrub species, and be conducted in a safe and efficient manner.

Pruning or shearing should not adversely reduce the growth and vigor of the tree or shrub.

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

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

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

Pruning and shearing tools should be disinfected to prevent the spread of pathogens.

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.

Deciduous trees, except elms, birch, dogwood, and maples, may be pruned

during any season. However, pruning early in the spring following full-leaf development allows one to visualize the effect the pruning will have on the appearance of the tree. The pruning wound will begin to heal immediately at this time of the year.

Elms, birch, dogwood, and maples should be pruned after the trees are in full leaf. Pruning these species in late winter or early spring causes profuse bleeding.

Improving the Quality of Wood Products

Commercial timber trees selected for pruning should be the better trees in the dominant and co-dominant crown classes. Any tree which is too crooked or too rough to prune should be removed during an intermediate cutting.

When trees reach 3 inches diameter at breast height (DBH), prune branches from the lower one-half of the tree. Pruning should be done during the dormant season, usually from October 15 to April 1.

SPECIFICATIONS

Species to be pruned: _____

Method of pruning: _____

Site limitations: _____

Season of year to prune: _____

Guides to pruning/shearing provided: _____

Other: _____

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

(Complete or check as appropriate)

Inspect plant condition: _____

- Additional pruning: _____
- Pest management: _____
- Nutrient management: _____

• Forest stand improvement: _____

• Protect trees from fire and grazing: _____

• Other: _____

- **Safety Note:** Protective leg, knee, and thigh guards of metal, wire, mesh, or nylon fiber should be worn, especially when using shearing knives. Use safety goggles to avoid falling sawdust.

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