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, 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, 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 will match the limitations of the site, soils, and plants and will 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.

Burning of removed vegetation shall follow the criteria and considerations listed in the practice standard Prescribed Burning (338).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.