

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS**

TREE/SHRUB PRUNING

(Acre)
Code 660

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

Procedures, technical details and other information listed below provide additional guidance for carrying out of tree pruning. Properly pruning tree usually lives longer and remain healthy.

Periodic Pruning

Improve the appearance and form of trees or shrubs.

Improve the quality of wood products.

Improve the production of plant products.

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.

Reduce hazards to the general public and the potential property damage.

Pruning large trees requires special equipment such as rope, tree climbing

equipment and hydraulically operated bucket trucks.

Do not prune any branch/limbs that could come in contact with electrical wires. Trees branches/limbs conduct electricity and can cause a fatal shock. Call your power company and make arrangements for branch removal.

Pruning Techniques

Make a visual inspection of your tree crown and identify parts needing pruning.

Remove dead, drying and diseased branches.

Remove least-desirable branches when they are crossing or rubbing. Branches that rub result in decay zones or weak areas.

Remove the weakest or deformed branches.

Remove branches growing toward the center of the tree

Remove sucker branches or water sprouts near the base of the trunk. The water sprouts or suckers are characterized because they grow inside the crown and at the base of the tree; are rapidly growing and weakly attached; usually use more energy than they produce and that is why they are called suckers. It is best to remove those branches as soon as possible.

Remove branches competing with central leader branch.

Thin the tree crown to reduce wind resistance, preventing storm damage.

Thin the tree crown cover to allow sunlight to reach the understory. Apply a recommended solution to the trim area to prevent infestations or disease.

Branch removal

Learn to recognize the branch collar – a swollen area where the branch attaches to the trunk of the tree. The branch collar is a natural barrier to the spread of decay into the trunk. Any final branch cut should be made just outside the branch collar.

Heavy branches should be removed in a three-step method to prevent peeling of the wood and bark down the side of the trunk below the final cut.

Step 1: Make the first cut on the lower side of the branch about 3 or 4 inches from the trunk or main limb.

Step 2: Make the next cut 2 inches farther out on the branch from the top side. This will drop the branch without damage to the trunk.



Step 3: Make the final cut by removing the branch stub leaving ¼” to ½” remaining. Make this cut next to the branch collar. Never cut off any of the swollen area where the branch attaches to the trunk.



When removing dead branches, do not disturb the living wood which is in the branch collar. Do not paint the cuts. Tree paint does not provide any protection to the tree.

Pruning Tools

- One-hand pruning shear
- Hand pruner
- Pole pruner
- Big pruner
- Chainsaw
- Never use an axe or machete

References: USDA Forest Service - A Tree Planting Guide for PR and Other Caribbean Area Countries