

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, 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 will match the limitations of the site, soils and plants and 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. Refer to Tree/Shrub Pruning Design Procedures (660DP) and NE Forestry Technical Note 71 for detailed guidance.

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 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 when possible.

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.

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

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

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

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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 additional actions as needed: i.e., additional pruning, pest management, nutrient management and/or forest stand improvement.

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.

NE FOTG Standards-

Tree/Shrub Pruning Design Procedures (660DP)

Prescribed Burning (338)

NE Forestry Tech Note 71, How to Prune Trees