

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**TREE AND 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.
- Increase or decrease the foliage and branching density for other specific intents, e.g., wind and snow control, noise abatement, access control, and visual screens.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On any area with trees and shrubs needing pruning.

**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 objectives.

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

Comply with applicable laws and regulations, including New Mexico Best Management Practices (BMPs).

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Time pruning and shearing to least disturb seasonal wildlife activities.

Disinfect pruning and shearing tools as needed to prevent the spread of pathogens.

Economic analysis is recommended before starting pruning and shearing projects.

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

Sufficient herbaceous vegetation must be left in the stand following pruning to prevent wind and water erosion and other natural resource concerns.

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

**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.

Specifications for revegetation of landings and trails should include selection of non-invasive species, timing, and method of application.

**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.

Contact the local NRCS conservationist immediately when unexpected problems, questions arise during practice installation.

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