Why Topping Trees Hurts

From the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)

Topping, also known as “heading,” “tipping” or “rounding over,” is the indiscriminate cutting of tree branches to stubs

Year 1: The topped tree is an ugly stub. The pruned tree’s size is reduced, but it’s form and beauty retained.

Year 3: Fast growing sprouts have sprung from the topped tree in large numbers. The pruned tree adds growth more slowly and naturally.

Year 6: The topped tree is taller and bushier than ever. The pruned tree is safer, more beautiful and the size is better controlled.

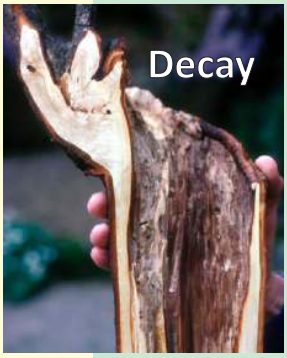
Topping...

Is An Unhealthy Crash Diet

Leaves make the food and topping removes the entire food factory of the tree. Instead of growing normally, producing the roots, branches, and leaves it needs, the tree pushes out new leaves, uses up its energy reserves to do so, becomes stressed, and begins a slow spiral towards death.

Causes Structural Decay

Trees don't heal wounds, they only cover them up, sealing off the damage. Trees cannot seal over the topping cuts before decay sets in.



Creates Hazards

New branches that grow after topping are weakly attached. The combination of a weakly attached branch increasing in size, on a limb with spreading internal decay, increases the chance of branch failure.

Could Result in Liability

Topped trees are prone to breaking and can be hazardous. Since topping is not an acceptable pruning practice, a homeowner may be found negligent in a court of law for any damage caused by the branch failure of a topped tree.

Is Expensive

Topping is a high maintenance practice. While the tree may survive for a few more years, it will either require topping again or storm damage will have to be cleaned up.

Has Hidden Costs

Trees provide environmental and economic benefits. Topping reduces a tree's ability to clean the air, produce oxygen and reduce storm water run-off. Topping also reduces the amount of shade provided and can lead to an increase in summertime cooling costs.

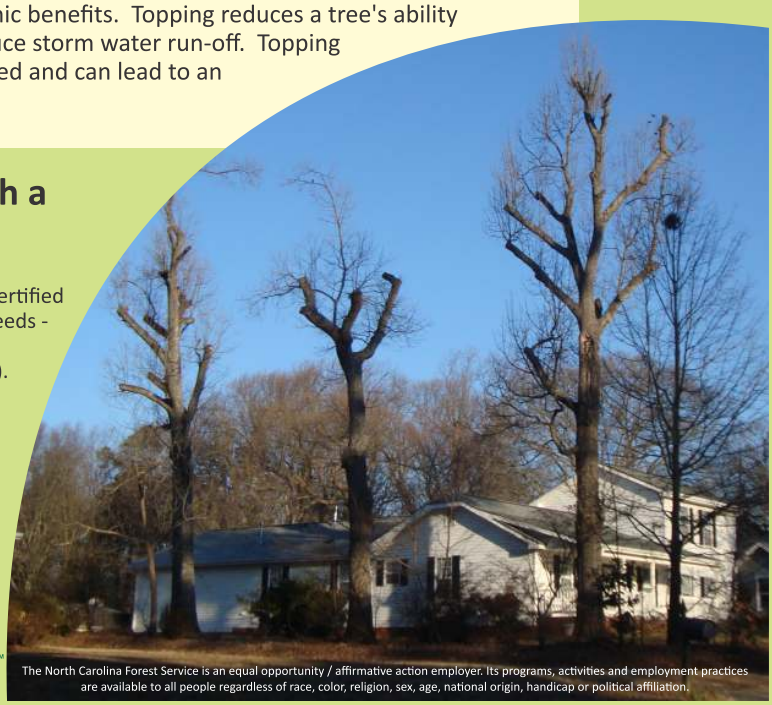
It's your property, work with a true tree care professional.

The NC Forest Service recommends the use of certified professionals for all of your tree maintenance needs - International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA). Look for the professional certified arborist logo.

To find an ISA Certified Arborist near you, visit www.treesaregood.com

To find a consulting arborist visit www.asca-consultants.org

To learn more about Why Topping Hurts Trees visit www.treesaregood.com



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