



WHAT TO ASK AN ARBORIST

Before you hire an arborist, ask them these questions to ensure you're receiving the highest quality work that focuses on the health and longevity of your trees. Start by making sure they say yes to these two:

Are you ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified?

Are you a registered Tree Service Provider in my area?

Do you have TRAQ (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification), if the job involves risk assessment?



When is it appropriate to top a tree?

In short, it is never appropriate to top a healthy and structurally sound tree.

You may see branch shortening techniques used in these scenarios:

- Young fruit trees to establish harvesting height
- Trees under utility lines as required by law
- Creating wildlife snags
- Establishing hedges
- Removing dead/diseased limbs

Reducing the height of a healthy tree simply because it is "too big" or to improve a view increases future maintenance needs and the likelihood of tree failure.

What are your guidelines for shearing?



Appropriate shearing is done only on certain plant species and in formal settings like hedges, topiary, and some Japanese gardens.

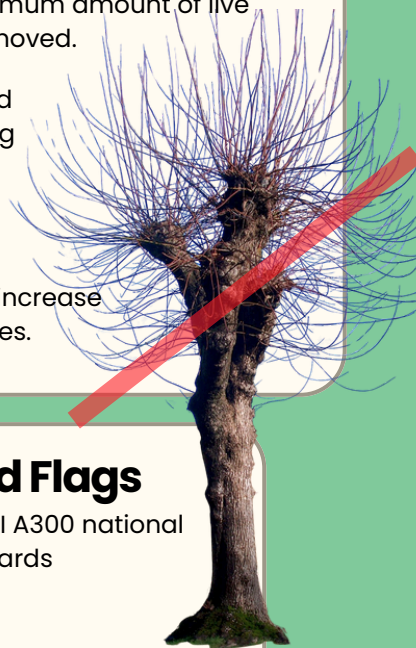
Note that shearing is **always** a high-maintenance pruning practice.

Can you explain...?

- The objective: Why the tree is being pruned (clearance, aesthetics, structure, risk reduction, etc.)
- Treatment: The specific pruning cuts or type of cuts that will accomplish the objective
- Pruning amount: The maximum amount of live foliage expected to be removed.

A professional arborist should be able to explain the pruning plan for every tree, including species and location, either verbally or ideally in writing.

An arborist's work should not increase the maintenance or risk of trees.



Watch for Red Flags

- ❗ Unfamiliarity with the ANSI A300 national consensus pruning standards
- ❗ Door-to-door solicitation
- ❗ Recommends topping healthy trees or reducing height simply because a tree is "too big"
- ❗ Promotes general thinning of mature trees to improve tree health or stability (often referred to as "windsailing" or "windsail thinning")
- ❗ Cannot explain the objective of the proposed pruning
- ❗ Cannot describe how much live foliage will be removed and the potential impacts on tree health
- ❗ Cannot provide proof of insurance or required licensing

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Don't Top
Trees