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**TREE AND PALM PRUNING
 GUIDELINES**



Boca Raton City Hall
 201 West Palmetto Park Road
 Boca Raton, Florida 33432

**TOPPING &
 HAT RACKING**



of trees is the indiscriminate cutting back of branches leaving stubs. The most common reason given for topping and hat racking is to reduce the tree's size and make it safer; however, removal of branches and leaves disfigures the tree and cuts off the tree's ability to manufacture nutrients. This starvation activates the roots to send rapid new growth of multiple shoots to grow below the stubs. Stubs cannot heal properly and

are vulnerable to insect infestation, decay and, removing the tree's canopy makes the trunk susceptible to sunburn. This misguided practice makes the tree more hazardous because the new rapid thick growth acts as a wind sail, which could blow over in heavy winds. Never top a tree or allow anyone to top your trees.

**EXCESSIVE LIFTING
 & OVER THINNING**

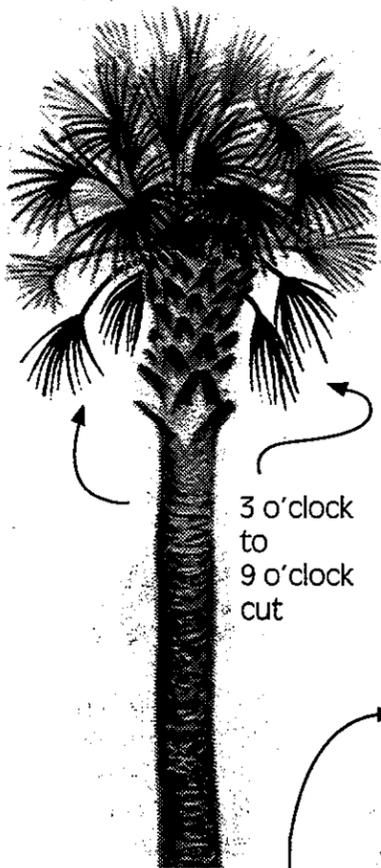
are common but poor pruning practices. This type of pruning where the lower branches of the tree are removed to provide clearance for cars, structure and people causes trees to be top heavy, reduces trunk taper and increases chances of branch breakage. It also disfigures the natural form of the tree.



Illustrations - Broward County Dept. of Planning & Environmental Protection

PALM PRUNING

Most palms shed their fronds naturally. Try to avoid pruning palms when possible. When not possible, only remove dead fronds or fronds that hang below the right angle to the trunk, or at 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock positions. Palm fronds cycle nutrients to the heart of the palm, and frond removal deprives the palm of needed nutrients and weakens its defenses. Blooming stalks, seeds and fruit are a food source for birds and native animals, and nice if left for them. They can be removed without removing fronds.



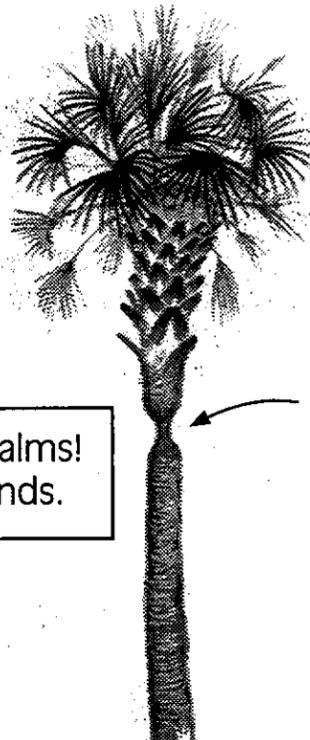
3 o'clock to 9 o'clock cut

Incorrect Pruning

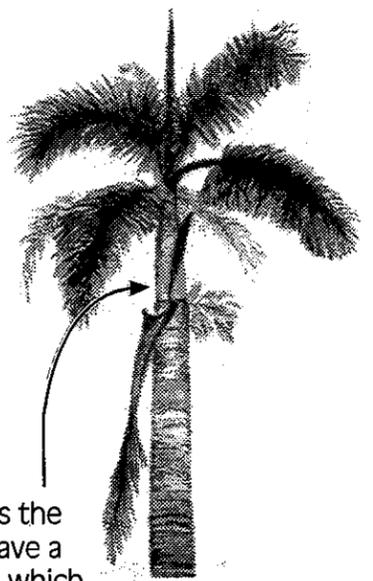


Hurricane Pruning/ Candle Cuts, the removal of most of the fronds and shaving the bud into a point, is extremely harmful to palms

**Never Hurricane Prune Palms!
 Never pull or rip off fronds.**



Hurricane Pruning/ Candle Cuts causes the trunk to narrow, creating a weak area that could snap.



Palms, such as the Royal Palm, have a "crown shaft" which is the green column below the fronds. It should be allowed to self prune.

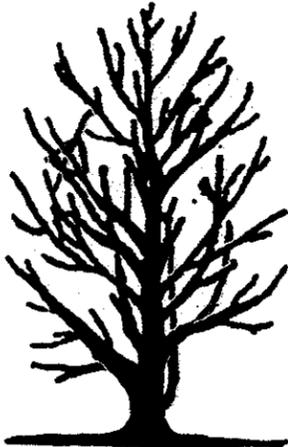
Original Artwork by Susan Pelish

The Boca Raton Beautification Committee encourages all residents to plant trees and care for them properly. The City of Boca Raton has received the prestigious "Tree City USA" award each year since 1980 thanks to their efforts in planting and maintaining our landscape. Residential planting adds to the beauty of our City, purifies the air we breathe, shields us from noise and provides shade for our homes. (Properly cared for trees can increase the value of our homes up to 20%!) Do not reduce your tree canopy unless absolutely necessary.

PROPER PRUNING TECHNIQUES



SAMPLE TREE



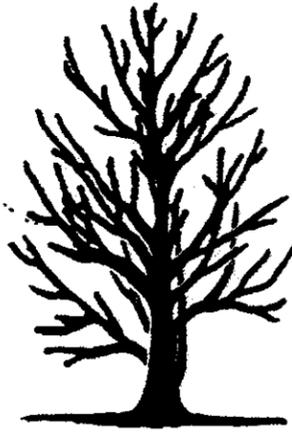
CROWN CLEANING

is the removal of dead, dying, diseased, crowded, weakly attached and low vigor branches from the crown of a tree.



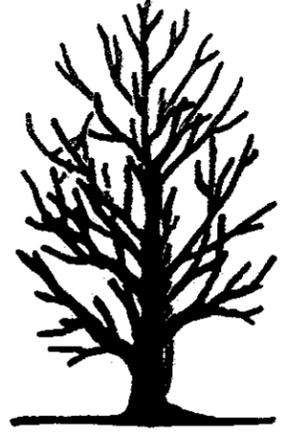
CROWN THINNING

is the selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown. Thinning opens the foliage of a tree, reduces weight on heavy limbs, and helps retain the tree's natural shape.



CROWN RAISING

removes the lower branches from a tree in order to provide clearance for buildings, vehicles, pedestrians and vistas.



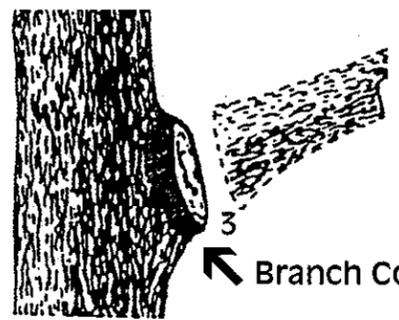
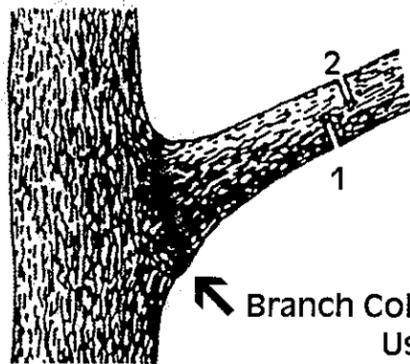
CROWN REDUCTION

reduces the size of a tree, often for clearance for utility lines. Reducing the height or spread of a tree is best accomplished by pruning back the branch to another branch that is large enough to be the leader. Do not remove more than 1/4 of the tree at one time.

NOTE: These trees are purposely shown without leaves to accentuate the branch structure and the proper pruning cuts. Do not remove the leaves.

MAKING THE PROPER PRUNING CUTS

Pruning Cuts should be made just outside the branch collar. The branch collar contains trunk tissue that will eventually cover the cut and should not be damaged or removed. If a large limb is to be removed, its weight should first be reduced. This is done by first making an undercut 12-18 inches from the limb's point of attachment. A second cut is made from the top directly above or a few inches further out on the limb. This removes the limb leaving the 12-18 inch stub. Lastly, the stub is removed by cutting back to the branch collar. This technique reduces the possibility of tearing the bark. A Certified Arborist will follow this process. Never remove a branch flush with the trunk as this removes the branch collar.



Use the 3-cut method to remove a large limb.

The Boca Raton Beautification committee recommends hiring a Certified Arborist to take care of your trees. Always ask for the following:

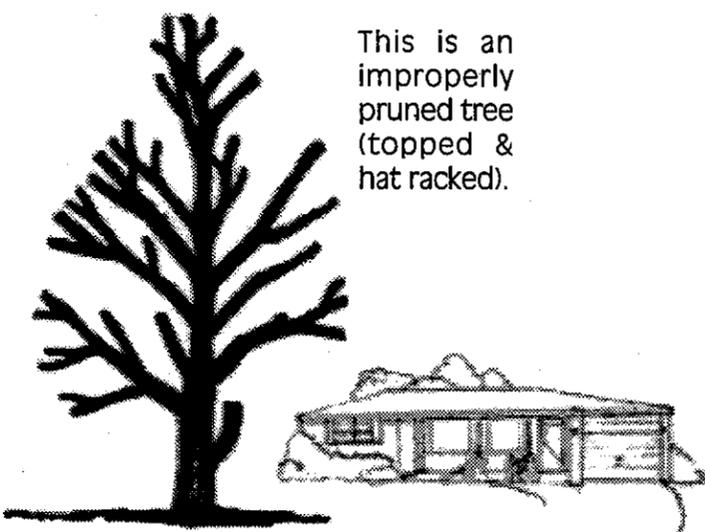
- Certified Arborist Card
- Occupational License
- Hazard Insurance
- Sample Contract
- References

What is a Certified Arborist and Why Hire One?

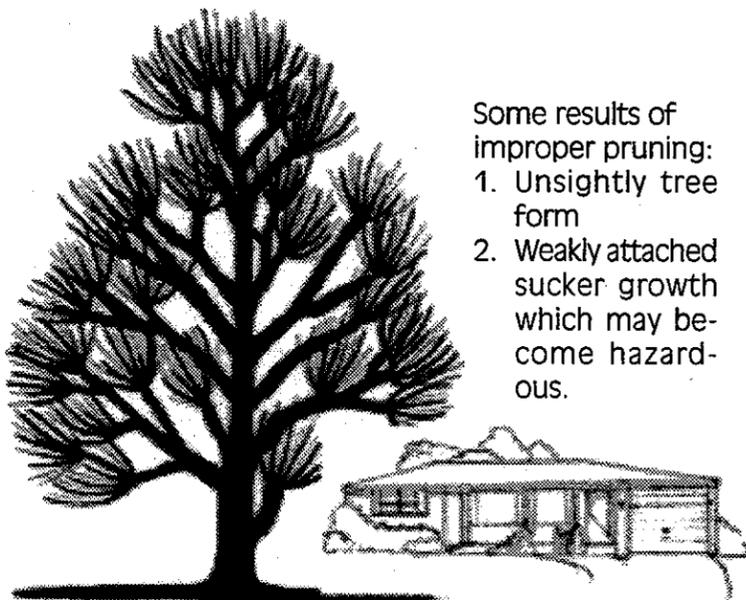
The International Society of Arboriculture administers an internal, self-regulating certification program that is a non-governmental voluntary process by which individuals can document their base of knowledge and competence required to provide proper tree care. Certified Arborists are individuals who have achieved a level of knowledge in the art and science of tree care through at least three years of experience, have passed a comprehensive examination developed by many of the nations' leading experts and continue their education to maintain their certification to maintain their certification. A Certified Arborist can provide a variety of services to help maintain your valuable investment. Ask to see an identification card and check the expiration date. For more information visit ISA website: www.isa-arbor.com

IMPROPER PRUNING DAMAGES TREES!

Topping, Hat Racking or Lopping a tree, which distorts a tree's natural form is not recommended for any reason. By suddenly removing the tree's canopy, which acts like an umbrella, sun can scald remaining exposed tissue and send the tree into shock. This practice removes leaves, which manufacture the tree's food through photosynthesis, upsets a tree's crown to root ratio and temporarily causes starvation. Topping to control height and spread of a tree has just the opposite effect, as it causes rapid new growth that is far more dense than normal growth; therefore, the tree returns to its original height in a very short time and with a far denser crown.



This is an improperly pruned tree (topped & hat racked).



- Some results of improper pruning:
1. Unsightly tree form
 2. Weakly attached sucker growth which may become hazardous.

The true costs of improper pruning are hidden. These costs include a disfigured tree which can reduce property value, the expense of removal and replacement when the tree dies, the loss of other trees and shrubs when they die due to sunburn, the risk of liability from weakly attached branches and increased future maintenance.