

Tree Topping: “Don’t Lop it. Leaf it!”

by Todd Snackenberg

Just about everyone out there has seen a topped tree and to a principled arborist or tree lover, it is a frightful sight.

What is Topping exactly?

Topping is basically trimming a tree in the wrong place. By making an incorrect pruning cut the tree will not “heal” properly. This places the tree in greater danger of insect attacks and disease exposure. The act of topping a tree usually means the removal of at least 50 percent of the canopy. This puts the tree into stress which causes increased shoot growth. These shoots are many times weaker than normal branch attachments and in time will make the tree more hazardous than before it was topped.

IT IS NOT NECESSARY to ever top any tree! Any educated arborist would be happy to explain proper pruning options that would be best for the tree and yourself. If the tree or trees in question are in such bad shape that they should be topped it might be best to completely remove them and plant new trees.

Remember always plant the right tree in the right place and trim gently my friends.