

FACT SHEET

Tree Topping - A Growing Menace



Tree topping is one of the worst tree management practices in existence. Not only does it leave an unsightly, stubby looking tree but removal of most or all of the leaves robs the tree of its food producing ability. In order to regain the ability to produce food the tree grows a flush of weakly attached new limbs that look like “witches brooms”. These weakly attached limbs often break off during storms,

creating the very problem that people may have been trying to prevent. Within a few years the tree is usually taller than before topping. The stubs invite fungus and other rot producing organisms that often begin to rot down through the tree branches or trunk (shown in the top photo) further weakening the tree and creating hazardous situations. The proper solution is to use pruning



techniques known as crown reduction or crown thinning. See the fact sheets on this website to learn about these techniques.