Archive for February, 2010

Contrary To Popular Belief………..
Monday, February 8th, 2010

** Topping WILL NOT invigorate a tree.

Fact: Topping immediately injures a tree and results in health problems such as insect invasions and rot. Even the seemingly healthy new shoots are immediately infected by decay organisms, resulting in their inability to withstand storm damage; nor do they contribute any nutrition to the tree. Topped trees need to be topped again and again.

** Topping a tree WILL NOT reduce storm damage and the tree WILL NOT be easier to maintain in the future

Fact: Topped trees can regain their original height in as little as two years. The fast-growing, extremely long and loosely attached shoots resulting from topping are more susceptible to breakage and storm damage. This is because they are weakly connected (if at all) to the internal structural system of the tree. Ultimately, a topped tree requires much more attention in the future (and, thus, more expense) than a properly pruned tree.

** Topped trees WILL NOT add value to your property.

Fact: Topped trees can become hazardous very quickly, and cause damage (either to your property or other's), which makes them a liability rather than an asset. Losing an asset always reduces value.

EXPERTS AGREE

DON'T TOP YOUR TREE

Reducing The Height Of A Large Tree
Monday, February 15th, 2010

In spite of our best efforts to assure that we have the right tree in the right place (for the long haul), circumstances sometimes change and legitimate reasons arise that create a need to reduce the size of a large tree. This can usually be accomplished through a pruning technique called crown reduction pruning *rather than by topping.*

Crown reduction is a "thinning cut" that reduces height and spread without resulting in stubs and creating the kinds of problems associated with topping. Rather than the ends of limbs and branches simply being lopped off wherever convenient, selected limbs forming the perimeter of the tree are pruned at their junction with side branches that are at least 1/3 the diameter of the branch being removed. In this manner, the remaining limbs can take over as the new leaders. This prevents or reduces latent buds from sprouting into the bushy growth that results from lopping off branch ends.
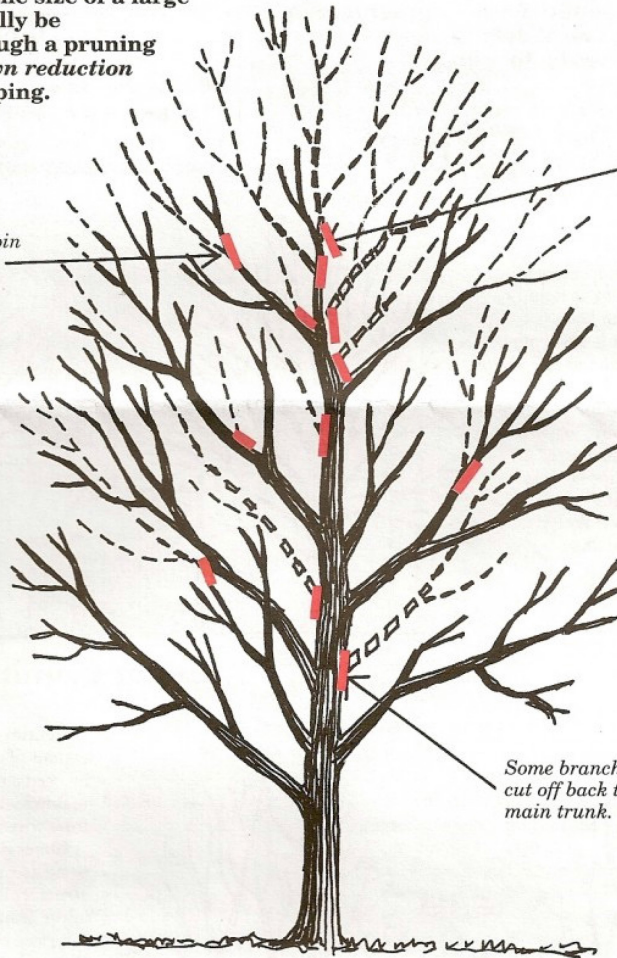
When done correctly, crown reduction can produce results that are quite amazing; like a good haircut – virtually unnoticeable. Height of the tree is controlled while the natural form of the pruned tree is perpetuated, thus retaining the values for which the tree was established and grown in the first place. Crown reduction pruning sure beats the alternative of topping, which is no good deal at all.

Reducing the Height of a Large Tree

There are sometimes legitimate reasons to reduce the size of a large tree. This can usually be accomplished through a pruning method called *crown reduction* rather than by topping.

The tallest branches are cut back to a large-diameter secondary branch so that a leader remains.

Perimeter limbs are pruned where they join large-diameter side branches.

Some branches may be cut off back to the main trunk.

Functionality
Saturday, February 27th, 2010

There are many reasons to plant a tree, or trees, around the home landscape. Most folks do so because they believe a tree will add beauty and value to their property and help the environment of their neighborhood, in general. And they will! But trees can also be functional in our daily lives and activities, in addition to the intrinsic values of beauty and general environmental enhancement. The key to making them functional is proper planning before planting; i.e. making sure you plant the right tree in the right place, so you can assure that it will not only be pretty to look at, but will also provide a useful function for you and you family.

There are many examples I could cite, but I'll just list a few to pique your interest and get you to thinking about functionality (which is a pretty good two-bit word coming from me). For example:

* You might be thinking of getting the kids a new swing/play set later on so they can get away from the video games once in a while. Since they'll be using it mostly in warm weather (hopefully), it would probably be nice if it it had some shade on it during the hot part of the day. If you want to use a tree for that purpose, be sure to get it in the right location so the shade will be cast where you want it in the summer. Planting it on the north side of the swing set location may provide a nice looking backdrop for pictures of the kids swinging, but it won't be very shady. The tree will look just as pretty planted to the south of the set, and you can always change your photo point to include it in the background. Don't plant it too close either. You don't want it interfering with the swinging to such an extent that you'll be tempted to whack it back later on. NO TOPPING – REMEMBER?

* If you want to screen out something objectionable – like a busy street, or a nearby business place, or whatever – do a little research on the objectionable viewable (is this a real word?). Is it really objectionable all the time, or just during rush hour? If it's "bad" all the time, you may need a whole row of conifers, tightly grouped, to ameliorate the din. If it's only a problem "occasionally" A few trees in key locations may suffice. Think it through, then plant accordingly. If there's a nearby business place, see if they might cooperate on plantings that will enhance their business location, while screening your property to your satisfaction. Trees won't screen out everything, however. If you live down wind from a hog farm, move.

* Try to take advantage of trees growing on nearby properties. If your neighbor has some trees that cast good shade into your yard, and you're wanting to locate a party gazebo "somewhere" out there, look at the opportunity to place the G-Bo where it can benefit from your neighbors largess. Invite them over for a beer to slyly thank them. So it may require walking another 20 feet further from the kitchen with the eats and drinks. The shade is free.

* Need I go on? Yes, trees are pretty and they provide environmental and economic benefits, but they can also be functional, and thus useful to us humans, as they have been since they started growing in the earth and we started walking on it.

FUNCTIONALITY!!!!!!!