

Sec. 78-328. - Pruning.

The pruning standards in this article shall apply only to all nonresidential uses and to common areas in all planned developments and within developments of regional impact.

(a) *Crown reduction.* Crown reduction of shade trees shall be prohibited until the tree canopy has reached at least 15 feet in diameter, excluding the following:

- (1) To remove limbs or foliage presenting a hazard or in conflict with a crime prevention program;
- (2) To remove dead or diseased limbs;
- (3) To reinforce strength of form, or
- (4) In association with tree or palm relocation work.

After a tree canopy reaches 15 feet in diameter, crown reduction shall only be permitted as incidental when correct pruning standards are used and when there are constraints such as but not limited to power lines and structures.

(b) *Plant characteristics.* Plant characteristics shall be reviewed during the approval process for landscape plans to prevent conflicts with building design, signage, utilities, and drainage. Unless otherwise approved by the city, trees shall be allowed to grow to a shape and size typical of their species throughout their life cycle.

(c) *Pruning standards and requirements.* The following are general pruning standards and requirements established for the city.

- (1) Hatracking. Hatracking is prohibited. For the purposes of this article, hatracking is defined as one or more of the following actions:
 - a. Flat-cut the top or sides of a tree, severing the leader or leaders;
 - b. Make internodal cuts; prune a tree by stubbing off mature wood larger than three inches in diameter; or
 - c. Reduce a mature tree's total circumference or canopy spread by one-third or more.
- (2) Palm trees. Pruning palm trees shall be limited to dead fronds and up to one-third of the green fronds and seed pods.
- (3) Maximum limb pruning. Maximum limb pruning, or severely cutting back lower branches to increase sight visibility from underneath a tree's canopy, shall not exceed 13.5 feet from the ground level to the collar of the first limb.

(d) *Alternative canopy shapes.* If other than the normal expected tree canopy shade and size is desired by the owner of the trees, the desired shape and size shall be indicated on the approved landscape plan. If a desired shape and size is not noted on the

approved landscape plan, trees shall be allowed to grow to their natural shape and size. Landowners can request that their approved site plans be amended to allow tree shaping if any of the following conditions apply:

- (1) A tree or trees are located in a constraining situation, such as under power lines;
or
 - (2) A tree or tree's unnatural shape is to be used as an accent or focal point in a landscape design, but not for the total landscape design. A maintenance commitment must be clearly outlined on the landscaping plan to explain the care and upkeep of unnaturally shaped trees.
- (e) *Performance.* Pruning shall be performed by a person or tree service that is knowledgeable with the latest standards of the National Arborist Association. Copies of these standards are included in the city's landscape handbook. All tree service companies shall obtain a city occupational license, or applicable countywide license.
- (f) *Violations.* Excessive pruning, such as hatracking, may be considered tree abuse and a code violation by the city's code enforcement board. Each tree hatracked shall be considered a clear and separate violation, with a maximum fine of \$250.00 for the first tree and a maximum fine of \$250.00 for each additional tree. If the city's code enforcement board has made a previous determination that a person has violated this article, then such person may be charged with a repeat violation. A maximum fine of \$500.00 for the first tree and a maximum fine of \$500.00 for each additional tree shall be set by the city's code enforcement board for repeat violation of this article. In determining the correctness of particular tree pruning techniques, the city shall use the current edition of the "Pruning Standards for Shade Trees," published by the National Arbors Association, or any future national standard on shade tree pruning. Tree replacement may be required by the code enforcement board.

(Ord. No. 17-2000, § 169, 7-20-00)