

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is the Marion Tree Board and what purpose does it serve?

The Marion Tree Board is a volunteer advisory committee that serves as a resource to recommend and advise the government and citizens of Marion regarding the care, selection, and planting of trees on public lands and rights of way. In addition, the Tree Board is responsible for educating the public in the care, selection, protection, and planting of trees.

## 2. What is Tree City USA?

The Tree City USA® program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. To be eligible a community must meet the following four requirements:

1. A tree board or municipal department responsible for program oversight.
2. A tree care ordinance.
3. A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita.
4. An arbor day observance and proclamation.

The City Marion was one of the first communities in the state to be honored with the Tree City USA designation in 1999.

## 3. Why are trees so important to the city?

Trees are beautiful and they improve the quality of life for people in many ways.

-  Trees help clean the air of harmful pollutants.
-  Trees help stabilize the land.
-  Trees help cool the hot summer air in urban areas.
-  Tree-lined streets discourage speeding traffic.
-  Trees provide a home for wildlife.
-  Trees are pleasant to look at and give people a sense of well-being.
-  Trees improve property value.
-  Well cared for trees in parks and along city streets make it apparent that people care about their community.

# SAY NO TO TREE TOPPING

Tree Topping is the practice of severely cutting limbs larger than 3" in diameter to stubs within the tree's crown so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree.

## Reasons Not To Top

### Shock

A tree's crown is like an umbrella that shields much of the tree from the direct rays of the sun. By suddenly removing the protection, the remaining bark tissue is so exposed that scalding may result. It can also be a dramatic effect on neighboring trees and shrubs. If understory vegetation thrives in shade and the shade is removed, poor health and death may result.

### Starvation

Good pruning practices rarely remove more than 1/2 to 1/3 of the crown, which in turn does not seriously interfere with the ability of the tree's leafy crown to manufacture food. Topping removes so much of the crown that it upsets an older tree's well-developed crown-to-root ratio and temporarily cuts off its food-making ability.

### Ugliness

A topped tree is a disfigured tree. Even with its regrowth it never regains the grace and character of its species. The landscape and the community are robbed of a valuable asset.

### Rapid New Growth

The goal of topping is usually to control the height and spread of a tree. Actually, it has just the opposite effect. The resulting sprouts (often called water spouts) are far more numerous than normal new growth and they elongate so rapidly that the tree returns to its original height in a very short time - and with a far denser crown.

### Insects and Disease

The large stubs of a topped tree have a difficult time forming callus. The terminal location of these cuts, as well as their large diameter, prevent the tree's natural defense system from doing its job. The stubs are highly vulnerable to insect invasion and spores of decay fungi. If decay is already present in the limb, opening the limb will speed the spread of disease.

Source: North Carolina Urban Forest Council

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# City of Marion Tree Board

## URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

Proud Member of Tree City USA  
1989-2011

For more information contact:  
City of Marion  
(828) 652-3551  
194 N. Main St.  
Marion N.C. 28752

# Best Management Practices For A Sustainable Urban Forest

## Site Selection:

Trees have many advantages including shade, aesthetics, screening, windbreak, as well as add to a site's overall property value. However, the right tree in the wrong location can be a nuisance and be costly to maintain. Therefore, when deciding where to plant a tree, proper attention should be given the following factors:

1. Site limitations and obstructions that will limit a tree's growth such as buildings, impervious surfaces, and overhead and underground utilities.
  2. Select a tree that is compatible with the location's soil, light, water availability, and temperature.
  3. Consider a tree's size at maturity when choosing a location.
- When planting in close proximity to utility lines or within confined areas choose a smaller tree that is no greater than 20 feet in height at maturity.
  - When planting large trees that reach 40 to 60 feet in height at maturity place them at least 35-feet away from buildings and structures.

## Planting a Tree:

Proper planting techniques may mean the difference between a healthy tree and one that dies. By following a few simple recommendations, you will give your tree the best possible start to life.

### Plant the tree high.

Dig a hole one or two inches less than the soil level in the container or the depth of the rootball, so that the tree is planted one to two inches higher than the surrounding soil. Be sure not to plant the tree too deep. It is better to leave a few roots exposed than to cover the trunk of the tree with soil. Improper planting may lead to less growth or crown rot and eventually death of the tree.

Dig holes at least two times wider than the container or rootball. For bareroot trees, make the hole wide enough to accommodate the roots without having to bend them.

Roughen the sides of the hole to make it easier for the roots to penetrate. Check for twisted, circling or kinked roots. Cut and remove roots that wrap around or are broken or discolored.

Refill the hole with the original soil. Soil amendments like peat moss, compost, rice hulls or fir bark are not necessary. Keep the top of the rootball free of soil. Water the tree thoroughly after planting to settle the soil around the roots.

### Staking a tree.

Not all trees require staking. Improper staking may even cause serious damage to a tree. An unstaked tree with its top moving in the wind will develop a better root system, have a greater trunk taper and thickness and have less wind resistance than a properly staked tree. Young trees may require staking for a short time to hold it upright until a strong trunk develops.

When staking use two stakes, one on either side of the rootball, approximately 18 inches from the trunk. To find the tie placement, move your hands up the tree trunk until the tree remains upright – place ties at this location. Ties should be of flexible material to protect the tree trunk from damage. Remove stakes as soon as the tree will stand on its own. Most trees do not need to be staked more than a year.

### Water the tree.

Newly planted trees require regular, deep watering. Construct a basin slightly larger than the rootball around the tree. Fill the basin once a week during hot weather and less often if it is cool or rains. (Do not over water. Soil should be dry one-foot below the surface before watering.) In winter or during long rain events open one side of the basin or remove the basin entirely, so water does not stand around the tree. After the first six weeks, the roots will have grown into the surrounding soil and the tree will require less watering.

### Proper Pruning Practices:

Proper pruning helps trees maintain balance and integrity and can prevent more serious problems years later. Trees respond best to pruning when they are young (two to six years old). Trees younger than two years old generally should not be pruned. Mature trees respond best to periodic pruning every five years to thin

the canopy (not tree topping). For more substantial pruning, particularly if it can not be done from the ground, seek the expertise of a certified arborist.

### Directions For Pruning.

#### In Winter:

- *Competing Leaders:* If more than one limb competes to be the main trunk, choose the straightest or largest and remove the competition.
- *Lower Limb on the Trunk:* If the tree grew well in the summer, and the upper limbs shade the lower trunk, remove 2 or 3 of the lower limbs.
- *Creating and parallel limbs:* Prune limbs that grow directly above each other or cross one another.

#### Anytime:

- *Dead branches:* Remove dry, brittle branches just below the dead wood.
- *Broken branches:* Clean cuts heal better than ragged tears.
- *Water sprouts:* Remove branches growing straight up from limbs.
- *Suckers:* Prune growth coming from the rootball

### DO NOT:

- Do not apply wound paint. It can seal diseases into the tree.
- Do not top the canopy of the tree. This causes weaker limbs to grow back, which can cause damage to property and reduces the tree's life expectancy.

Source: Sacramento Tree Foundation Neighborhoods Guidebook.

## For More Information Visit

### These Websites:

- <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/>
- <http://www.dfr.state.nc.us/>
- <http://www.arborday.org/>
- <http://www.treesaregood.com/>
- <http://www.fs.fed.us/>
- <http://www.ncufc.org/>