

Topless trees  
are indecent!



For more information, call the Urban Forestry  
Program at 425-2558 or visit  
[www.LexingtonKY.gov/forestry](http://www.LexingtonKY.gov/forestry)

*Protect Your Investment!*

# Stop Tree Topping



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government  
Division of Environmental Policy  
200 E. Main Street  
Lexington KY 40507

*livegreenlexington*

Plan ahead: properly plant  
and prune trees



## What is tree topping?

Known as stubbing, heading or dehorning, topping is the severe removal or cutting back of branches to stubs larger than 3-inches in diameter. **Topping of street trees and trees on commercial properties in Lexington is prohibited by law.**

## Why do people top trees?

-- They have a misconception that it is healthy for trees.

-- They hate to rake leaves, but topping generates more leaves.

-- They have problems with roosting birds, however, topping generates better cover for birds than properly pruned trees.

## Why is topping undesirable?

-- It takes years off of a tree's life.

-- It is unhealthy because it promotes wood decay and damaging insects.

-- It is expensive and often results in having to replace the tree.

-- It causes rapid new growth that is much weaker than the original growth and promotes weak branch attachments, making trees dangerous.

-- Topped trees are unsightly, look deformed, and ruin the landscape for everyone

## What can you do?

-- Plant the right tree in the right place. There are many varieties of trees that make lovely street trees and don't grow up to heights that interfere with power lines.

-- Prune trees in stages and use the right equipment. Pruning is thinning out selected branches and limbs, leaving main branches and limbs to grow stronger.



-- The method of pruning depends on the age and species of the tree, location and the desired objective.

-- Replace topped trees. Correctly pruned trees are less expensive to maintain in the long run.

-- If you hire the work done, make sure the tree company or arborist you hire subscribes to the American National Standard for Tree Care Operations – ANSI Z133.1 The publication sets certain safety

standards for all tree care operations, including pruning, trimming, repairing, maintaining and removing trees.

-- There are many publications and books available on pruning trees. Check with the Fayette County Extension Office or visit [www.LiveGreenLexington.com](http://www.LiveGreenLexington.com).