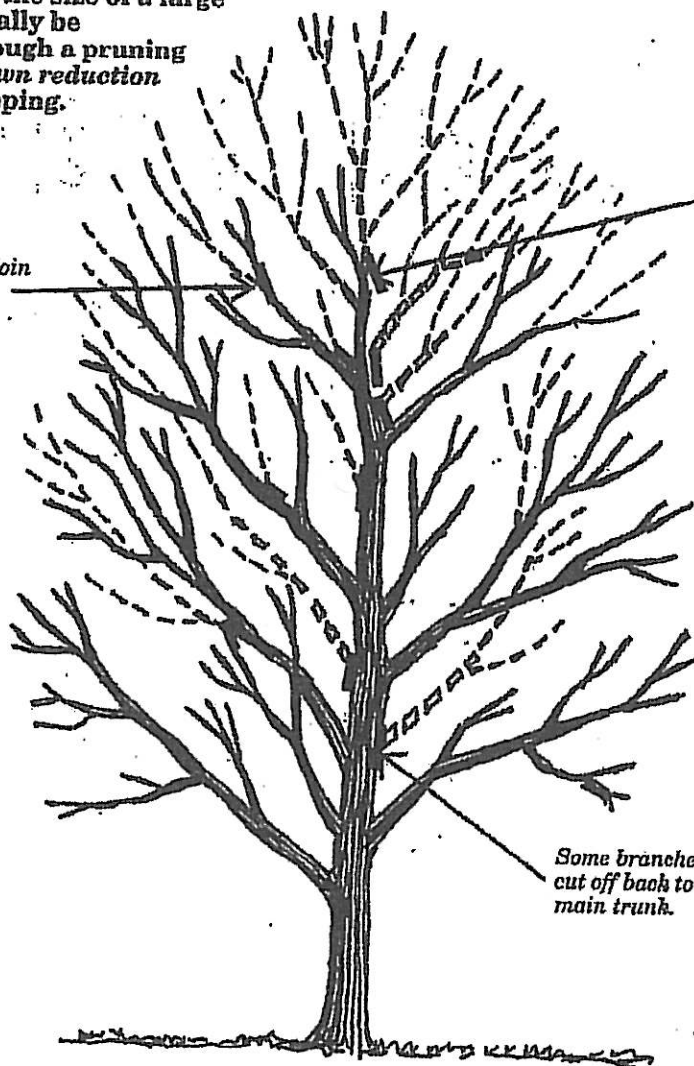


Reducing the Height of a Large Tree

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.

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

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



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

Arborists have different terms for pruning operations, usually based on the purpose for pruning and diameter of the limbs to be cut. These go by such names as hazard reduction pruning, crown raising (removal of lower limbs), crown cleaning, and others. A good reference on the technicalities of pruning is Richard W. Harris' *Arboriculture* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632). For standardized definitions, obtain a copy of *Tree, Shrub and Other Woody Plant Maintenance — Standard Practice* (ANSI A300-1995) from the International Society of Arboriculture (P.O. Box 9129, Champaign, IL 61828-9129).

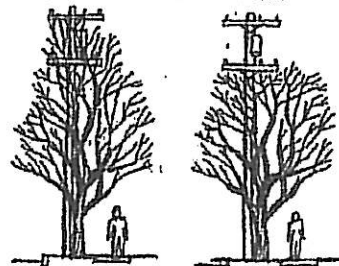
As an alternative to topping, the technique of most importance is one called crown reduction. The results can be most amazing. When done correctly, crown reduction can be like a good haircut — virtually unnoticeable.

Crown reduction is a "thinning cut" that reduces height and spread without resulting in stubs and creating the kind of problems associated with topping. Rather than the ends of branches simply being lopped off, or truncated, 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 way, 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. For even more assurance against sprouting, large cuts can be treated with naphthaleneacetic acid (NAA), but this should be applied only by or with the advice of an arborist.

With care, crown reduction can be achieved while at the same time retaining the species' natural form. At other times, this method may be modified to allow utility lines to pass through while sparing the tree from removal.

An example of crown reduction to control tree growth beneath utility lines.



Crown Reduction