

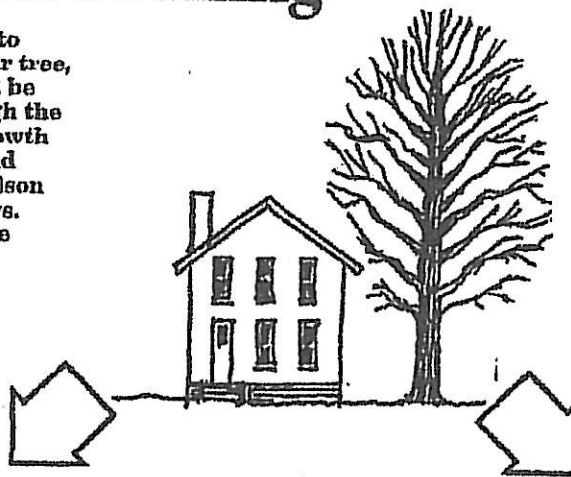
Topping vs. Pruning

When a decision is made to reduce the size of an older tree, it can be topped, or it can be pruned properly. Although the speed and nature of regrowth will depend on species and local factors, any comparison of irresponsible topping vs. competent pruning will be dramatic.

Topping by Any Other Name Is Just as Ugly

Sometimes pseudo tree experts use different terms for the malpractice of topping. Here is a rogues' gallery of synonyms:

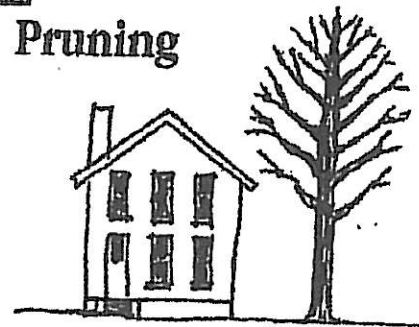
- Stubbing
- Heading
- Heading-back
- Stubbing-off
- Tipping
- Hatracking
- Topping-off
- Dehorning
- Lopping
- Roundover



Topping



Pruning

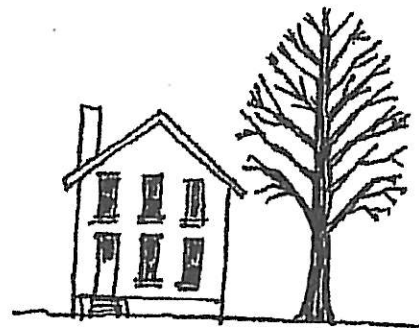
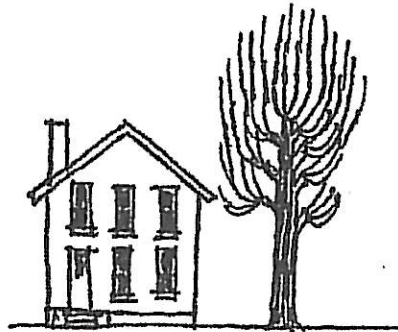


Year 1

The topped tree is an ugly stub and a remnant of a once lovely tree. If pruned properly, size is reduced but form and beauty are retained.

Year 3

Vigorous sprouts have sprung out of the topped tree in large numbers and are growing with abnormal rapidity. The pruned tree adds growth more slowly and distributes it more normally.



Year 6

In a relatively short time, the topped tree is as tall—and far bushier and more dangerous—than it was to begin with. The properly pruned tree is safer, more beautiful, and its size better controlled.

