

## Get the Facts. Think Before You Top

Healthy trees provide shade, reduce energy costs, prevent soil erosion, beautify landscapes and filter air and water. Some property owners become concerned when trees grow large and worry that branches will fall and cause property damage or harm. Often times “topping”, or the removal of large amounts of leaves and branches from a tree’s crown, is considered the best solution. All the experts agree that topping does not work, it’s dangerous and it’s expensive!

Removed branches will grow back rapidly, creating dangerous trees that fail in storms. The thick new branches or sprouts grow quickly but are weakly attached, breaking easily in storms. When a tree is topped, rather than properly pruned, it is weakened and opened to decay. This, too leads to the tree failing in storm events. Topping is expensive since it has to be repeated every few years, this shortens the life span of trees which results in a costly removal.

Before you top, get the facts. Avoid “door-to-door” tree services or landscapers that suggest tree topping. Many are misinformed about proper tree pruning techniques. Instead seek out professional advice. Contact an Arborist who is certified through the International Society of Arboriculture, and always get multiple bids.

Trees do make our community a better place to live by improving our air and water quality and beautify our neighborhoods. To maximize the community benefits of the urban forest, we need to take care of our existing trees and plant more trees. For more information on proper tree pruning, how to hire an arborist, how to participate in this campaign or attend a free Pruning Workshop contact Jessica Antoine, Urban Forestry Outreach Coordinator at (360) 619-1108, [jessica.antoine@ci.vancouver.wa.us](mailto:jessica.antoine@ci.vancouver.wa.us) or visit [www.cityofvancouver.us/urbanforestry](http://www.cityofvancouver.us/urbanforestry).

