

Topping a tree contributes to the decline of its health. It does nothing but cause grief for the tree and serves no purpose. Topping a tree can reduce its life by 50% or more, if it survives at all. Topping or pollarding, as it was called in Europe in previous centuries, was used to develop kindling and weaving materials.

When you top a tree, the tree reacts by developing buds and sucker growth at the point of the cut as well as on the main trunk wood in a desperate effort to survive. All this sucker growth competes and most of it does not survive, thus creating massive amounts of deadwood. The surviving suckers grow and become the new limbs.

The spots where the cuts were made, usually end up with rotting wood and cavities - with all that weight above it created by the new limbs. These trees become dangerous and will have a shorter lifespan than trees that have not been topped.

Trees should be pruned from the inside, thinning the interior sucker growth and removing deadwood. Proper cuts should be made to ensure the health of the tree.

Still, topping trees is a common practice in some areas. Homeowners think they should do it and some tree services will be more than happy to take their money.