

APPENDIX R: Tree Trimming/Pruning Guidelines

Purpose

To provide guidelines for pruning or trimming of live tree canopy.

Objective

§18 of the SIPOA Protective Covenants states, "Trees and distinctive flora shall not be intentionally destroyed, radically pruned or removed without the prior written permission of the ARC, or as may otherwise be permissible under regulations and guidelines established by SIPOA." The guidelines in this appendix are provided to aid Property Owners and their contractors in understanding SIPOA expectations for how pruning and trimming of trees shall be performed on the Island.

Guiding a tree's architecture through proper pruning should focus on creating and maintaining a strong overall structure with a functional and pleasing form by removing the smallest possible amount of living tissue at any one pruning. In each pruning cycle, live branches should be removed to direct growth to more desirable tree parts, largely by correcting defects and minimizing poor structure. Never prune if you do not know why the tree needs pruning, and do not indiscriminately remove branches with live foliage because this practice stresses the tree.

Guidelines

Section 5-Permitting Procedure of Appendix L-Tree and Natural Vegetation Preservation/Removal Policy describes the process for requesting authorization for tree trimming/pruning.

The Architectural Review Staff may review existing site conditions prior to approval/permitting of the pruning and after completion of the work. The required application and review fee are to be provided, and ARC approval is to be obtained, prior to initiation of any work. If common areas and rights-of-way are disturbed during the work, they shall be restored as required by the ARC prior to the return of the required deposit.

The following restrictions apply:

- All pruning shall conform to the approved techniques as described in the most current edition of ANSI A300 (Tree, Shrub and Other Woody Plant Maintenance - Standard Practices) Part 1 (Pruning) and in a manner consistent with ISA's Best Management Practices - Pruning.
- Work is to be performed by workers trained in compliance with ANSI Z133.1 safety guidelines, as required by OSHA.
- An ISA Certified Arborist® shall be on site to provide project oversight at least once each day.
- Pruning objectives shall be established prior to beginning work. One or more of the following methods shall be specified to achieve the objective:
 - Cleaning: Removal of dead, diseased, low vigor, and broken branches.
 - Thinning: Selective branch removal to improve structure and to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown. Proper thinning opens the foliage of a tree, reduces weight on heavy limbs, and helps retain the tree's natural shape.

- **Reduction:** Reduction of the height or spread of a tree, often used when a tree has grown too large for its permitted space. Note that reduction should only be used as a last resort and be applied to minimal portions of the crown.
- **Raising:** Removal of lower branches to provide vertical clearance (approximately 7' to 8') for sidewalks and driveways.

Other pruning techniques that may be discussed include espaliering, pollarding, young tree pruning, palm pruning, root pruning, and restorative pruning.

Instructions

Improper pruning of mature and middle-aged trees (e.g., making flush cuts and removing large branches) initiates decay inside the trunk and branches. Lions-tailing, over-lifting, and over-thinning are other poor pruning practices that promote weak branch unions, trigger unnecessary stress on the tree due to excessive live material removal, and create a misshapen crown.

Live branches greater than 3 inches shall not be removed without prior approval of the Architectural Review Staff.

Pruning of mature and middle-aged trees is to conform to the ANSI A300 pruning standard, which includes:

- Shall not cut off the branch collar (not make *flush* cuts)
- Shall use sharp pruning tools so as to not leave jagged, rough, or torn bark around cuts
- Shall not *top* or *lions-tail* trees
- Shall not *Roosters-tail*, or over prune palm trees
- Shall not perform internodal pruning or leave branch stubs
- Shall not remove more than 25% of the *live* foliage of a single limb on young and medium-age trees
- Shall not remove more than 10% of the total-tree *live* foliage in a single year on mature trees
- Shall leave 50% of the foliage evenly distributed in the lower 66% of the canopy on mature trees
- Shall not use equipment or practices that would damage bark or cambium beyond the scope of the work
- Shall not apply either wound dressings or tree paints to any pruning cuts
- Shall not climb any tree with tree climbing spikes or spurs except to perform an aerial rescue of an injured worker
- Shall use removal (thinning) cuts instead of heading cuts
- Shall cut with a hand saw at right angles any roots that must be removed

Sources/ Resources for Those Who Plan to Prune

Harris, Richard Wilson, James R. Clark, and Nelda P. Matheny. ***Arboriculture: Integrated Management of Landscape Trees, Shrubs, and Vines***. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2004. 340-364. Print.

Gilman, Edward F. *An Illustrated Guide to Pruning*. 2nd ed. Albany, N.Y.: Delmar Thomson Learning, 2002. 10, 18, 47, 211-212. Print.

Online Resources

Gilman, Edward Brian Kempf, Nelda Mathency, and Jim Clark “**Structural Pruning: Part 1**” International Arboriculture Society, 2013.

http://www.isa-arbor.com/events/conference/proceedings/2013/GILMAN_Structural%20Pruning.pdf

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)

<http://www.isa-arbor.com>

Trees Are Good (ISA’s community outreach website):

<http://www.treesaregood.com>

Guidelines: Pruning Mature Trees

http://treesaregood.org/treecare/resources/Pruning_MatureTrees.pdf

Guidelines: Pruning Young Trees

http://treesaregood.org/treecare/resources/Pruning_YoungTrees.pdf

Guidelines: Palm Tree Maintenance

<http://treesaregood.org/treecare/resources/palms.pdf>

Tree Care Industry Association

<http://tcia.org>

TreesSC (South Carolina’s Community Forestry Program)

<http://www.treessc.org>

Urban Tree Foundation

<http://www.urbantree.org>

ANSI A300 (Tree, Shrub and Other Woody Plant Maintenance - Standard Practices) Part 1 (Pruning)

<http://tcia.org/business/ansi-a300-standards/part-1>

ISA’s Best Management Practices - Pruning - 2009.

<http://www.isa-arbor.com/store/product.aspx?ProductID=58>

ANSI Z133.1 Safety Guidelines

<http://www.isa-arbor.com/store/product.aspx?ProductID=122>