

# The TRUTH about Topping Trees

## Decay

When trees are cut properly, they have the incredible ability to compartmentalize or ‘wall off’ the decaying tissue and cover the wound. When there are multiple or large wounds caused by topping, few trees can defend against all of these cuts. The decay fungi is given ‘free reign’ and is able to move throughout the tree, so the lifespan of the tree is greatly reduced.

## Rapid Growth and Hazards

The objective of topping is usually to manage the height of a tree, but the survival mechanism of trees causes them to produce numerous shoots below each cut. This rapid growth means that the tree will return to its height quickly and even more densely than before.

And, while normal branches develop in a socket of overlapping wood tissues - the new branches are only anchored by the outermost layers, so they are more prone to breakage as they grow against each other - especially in storms.

## Insects and Disease

Large, open pruning wounds expose the sapwood and heartwood to infestation. The shock of losing this large amount of wood and greenery creates stress. Because the tree is stressed, it may not have the ability to properly close these wounds to defend itself from insect and disease attacks.

## The "Ugly Factor"

Trees form a natural wonder in the variety of their shapes and habits. When topped, ugly stubs are often left in the canopy or the excessive new growth is evident and the natural grace is destroyed.

A topped tree can never fully regain the natural form of its species.



For more information on tree care, please visit [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com) a site created by the International Society of Arboriculture for quality tree care information.

## The TRUE Expense

Topping is a high-maintenance pruning practice with some hidden costs. It is not simply removing the top of the tree; if the tree survives, it will require pruning again within a few years. It will need to be reduced again or storm damage will need to be cleaned up. If the tree dies, it will have to be removed.

One ‘hidden’ cost is the reduction in property value. Healthy, well-maintained trees can add 10 to 20 percent to the value of a property. Disfigured, topped trees are considered an impending expense.

## Shock and Sunburn

The leaves in the crown of a tree absorb sunlight and protect the tree, like an umbrella, from the harsh rays and heat of the sun.

When the leaves are suddenly removed, the branches and trunk are left exposed and damage to the tissues of the tree can occur. You may see bark splitting, cankers and the death of some branches.

There may also be a dramatic effect on other trees and shrubs that are no longer in the shade of the tree.

## Starvation and Death

Proper pruning practices rarely remove more than 1/4 of the leaf bearing crown or green portions of a tree, but topping often removes 1/2 or more of the crown.

Since leaves are the food factories of a tree, removing them can temporarily starve a tree. If a tree does not have the stored energy to replace the lost leaves, it will be seriously weakened and can lead to tree death.

# 砍下樹頂非良策

## 樹木腐爛

由於樹木有奇妙的自療能力，適當地修剪樹木，可以把腐爛的組織「圍住」及包裹切口。但如果大家把整個樹頂砍下，則會造成很多大面積的切口，很少樹木可以在這情況下自救；腐爛的霉菌會很快便蔓延到整棵樹，一發不可收拾。

## 樹木更快長大及容易折斷

大家通常是為了阻止樹木長得太高太大而砍下樹頂，可是樹木有一種自救的本能，會在每個切口下面長出很多嫩枝新梢，結果很快便長大，回到原來的高度，甚至更加茂密。

此外，樹枝通常是從樹窩內長出，由木組織覆蓋著；但砍下樹頂後所長出的樹枝，則只從樹身最外層長出，互相糾纏，容易折斷。

## 蟲害與疾病

砍下樹頂留下的大切口，把樹心及軟木層暴露在外，容易引起蟲害及疾病蔓延，因為樹木受創而切口不能自然癒合，便抵擋不了蟲患及疾病的侵害。

## 樹形受破壞變得醜陋

樹木天然優美，形態多姿；但當樹頂給砍下，樹冠便留下光禿禿樹樁，有礙觀瞻。此外，樹木重生太多太大，便失去天然美態。

給砍下樹頂的樹木，永遠不能恢復其天然的物種形態。



## 隱藏開支 得不償失

用砍下樹頂的方法保養樹木，費時費財，因為如果樹木在樹頂給砍去後仍然存活，幾年後便要再修剪；如果不修剪，風暴到來，樹梢便會折斷及需要清理；如果樹木在樹頂給砍去後死掉，大家還要把枯樹移走。

另一項隱藏成本是，物業價格會下跌。如果物業擁有保養得宜的健康樹木，可以增值一至兩成。樹頂給砍下的損毀樹木變成一種負累，可算是一種緊急的開支。

## 樹身受損 陽光暴曬

樹冠的樹葉除了吸收陽光外，更好像一把傘子，能夠保護樹木，避免受太陽暴曬及過熱。如果突然剪去樹葉，樹枝及樹幹暴露在陽光之下，樹木組織便會受損，樹皮爆裂、出現枯枝病、甚至會有樹枝枯死。

由於樹頂給砍下，原來在樹蔭下的其他樹木及灌木叢，亦會受到太陽暴曬的傷害。

## 營養不足 枯死凋謝

適當修剪樹木時，甚少會把樹冠四分之一的樹葉剪掉；可是採用砍下樹頂的方法，則通常會剪掉一半或以上的樹冠。

由於樹葉為樹木製造養料，把樹葉剪掉會使樹木短暫性營養不足。若樹木儲存的養料不足以長出新葉，樹木便會枯朽，最後甚至凋謝死亡。

欲知保養樹木的詳情，請瀏覽網站 [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com)；這是由國際栽樹協會設立的網站，載有很多妥善護理樹木的資訊。