



**Execution:** Sometimes the entire crown of a tree must be reduced in height or spread, such as for utility line clearance or to minimize risk of failure. In addition to the size of parts to be removed, be sure to specify the clearance required above or along side of the crown when pruning near a building or for utility line clearance. That way, everyone will have the same understanding of what is to be performed. Portions of the crown, such as individual limbs, can be reduced in order to balance the canopy or to reduce likelihood of breakage on limbs with defects such as cracks and included bark or those that have grown to become too long.

Reduction is best accomplished by cutting limbs back to their point of origin or back to a lateral capable of sustaining the remaining limb and assuming apical dominance of the limb. When a branch is cut back to a lateral, no more than one-fourth of its foliage should be removed. A common rule of thumb is that the remaining lateral branch must be at least one-third the diameter of the removed portion, but this rule can vary with species, age, climate, and the condition of the tree. Consideration must also be given to the ability of the species to sustain this type of pruning. Species that are known to decay quickly from these types of cuts should be reduction pruned more conservatively than more decay resistant species. Never reduce a landscape tree by topping it. Topping causes decay, numerous sprouts, cracks in limbs, root decline, bark defects, and other problems.

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