

Press Release

Eddy County Cooperative Extension Service

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Eddy County Cooperative Extension Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Don't Dehorn Those Trees

It's February and time to think about pruning your trees.

In Carlsbad I often see trees which are Headed, Topped,

Stubbed or Dehorned instead of selectively pruned.

Heading, topping, stubbing or dehorning are terms used to describe a form of sever pruning that removes practically all the branches and leaf producing organs from a tree.

While this method is quicker and requires less skill than crown reduction pruning, in most cases it is less desirable. The resulting re-growth is vigorous and upright from the stubs. This forms a witches broom or compact head of new branches. This casts dense shade which results in weakly attached structurally unsound branches which will break in windstorms that we experience every spring. These branches in five years or less are more of a liability than the original tree form was, in most cases.

I have recently been requested by a number of homeowners to determine why their limbs are breaking. In inspecting and diagnosing these trees, I observed in virtually every case that the breakage was a result of the lack of pruning and overcrowding of trees. Most of these trees have not been properly pruned for many years and in some cases their entire life. Pruning is not a procedure that is done once every 10 to 15 years. Proper maintenance of a tree requires pruning almost every year. At the Think Trees Conference last year, one of the speakers made the statement that 90% of pruning can be done with 3 to 5 cuts per tree per year. But if a tree is not pruned every year, after 10 years it is not 30 to 50 cuts but 200 to 400 cuts that are required to accomplish a structurally stable tree

but a poorer tree than would have resulted with proper maintenance. A large tree supports tons of biomass in leaves and tissue; it has to be pruned to build a frame which will support that weight. We do not allow a building to be framed randomly and we should not allow a tree to be framed randomly, either. It takes less money and less work to maintain a tree annually than to correct a tree, which has been poorly or not maintained at all.

On February 25th at 2:00 in the afternoon we will have Dr. Hermerna of NMSU presenting a how to prune nut trees at the Sun Gardens Nursery in Artesia. At 4:00 in the afternoon he will be at the Agriculture science center on 4 Dinkus road to discuss pruning of mature nut trees. At 6:30 pm he will be at the Eddy County Extension Office, 1304 west Stevens to present information on growing pecans in the southwest. For more information Contact your Local County Extension office and ask for guide H-406. This and all programs are available to everyone regardless of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, or veteran status. If you have a special accommodation to attend one of these workshop please contact the Eddy County Extension Office before February 21. New Mexico State

University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Eddy
County Government Cooperating to put knowledge to work.

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Eddy County Extension Service and New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer and educator. Eddy County Government, New Mexico State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating, to put knowledge to work.

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We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress.
-- Will Rogers