

# Why we trim trees



The City of Oak Ridge Operates the Electrical Distribution System for the citizens of Oak Ridge.

Trees and tree limbs that contact the overhead portions of that system can and do cause electrical outages. When trees fall, large numbers of customers are without service while the system is re-built.

Removing danger trees and trimming healthy trees is an essential part of keeping “the lights on” for you.

## Trees we Trim

The City will trim any tree that might interfere with our main electric power lines, located on private or public property. We are unable to contact property owners prior to trimming trees on their property.

We do not trim trees on private property that interfere with only the service lines leading to a home.

## Tree Removal

Trees that are likely to fall on a power line are termed “danger trees.” These include dead or diseased trees, or trees with structural defects.

Where such danger trees are on public property, the City will pay for their removal. Where they are on private property, the City may require that the property owner remove the tree.

## Dangerous Trimming

In any situation where your trimming of a tree might expose you or your contractor to electrical hazards, the Department stands ready to help.

For example, if a service line interferes with your trimming or removal of a tree, we will remove and then replace the line for no charge during normal crew hours.



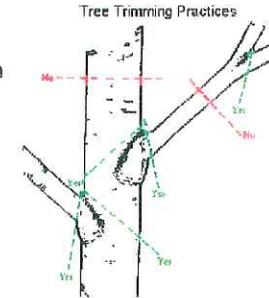
If a tree near our lines needs to be trimmed or removed, we will trim away the limbs near the high power line, leaving enough clearance

for a properly trained tree trimmer to complete the work.

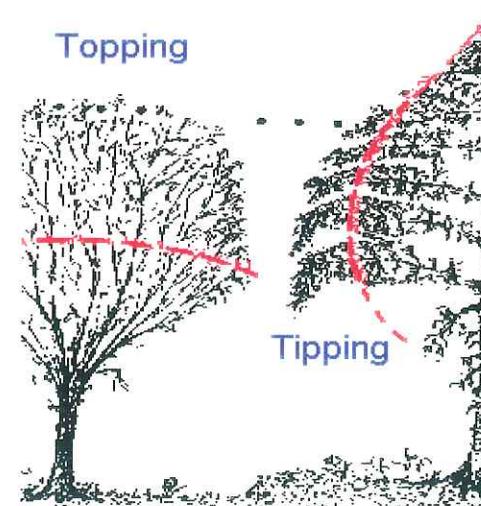
## Trimming Techniques

Proper trimming of trees is essential to the long term health of the tree.

The City of Oak Ridge exclusively uses the National Arbor Day approved technique known as “natural” or “lateral” tree trimming. All pruning cuts are made only at locations where a branch begins.



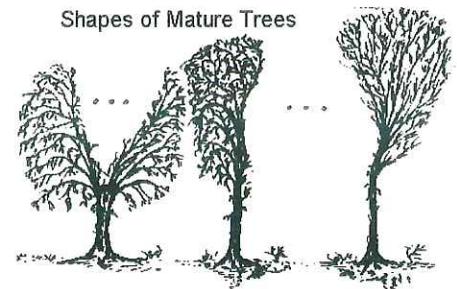
Many people ask us to “top” or “tip” the trees on their property. They believe that the tree has a better appearance if it is “rounded



over.” Unfortunately, the topping process is often self-defeating.

Bushy, weakly attached limbs quickly grow back higher than the original branches. In addition, arborists say that topping is the worst thing you can do for the health of a tree. It starves the tree by drastically reducing its food-making ability and makes the tree more susceptible to insects and disease. The City tree ordinance specifically prohibits this type of trimming.

The result of lateral tree trimming are trees that can have an unusual appearance, particularly from the side.



This is an unfortunate consequence of proper tree trimming operations that will correct itself somewhat with time.



Oak Ridge is proud to be a "Tree City" recognized by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

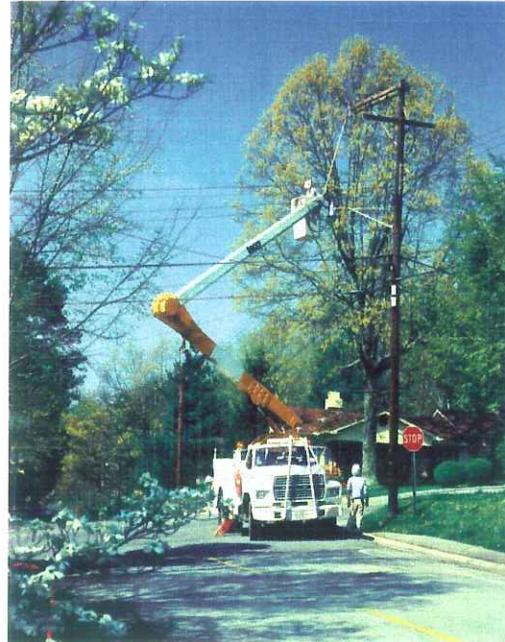


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## TREES AND THE ELECTRIC SYSTEM: Tree Trimming Policies and Practices

Produced by the City of Oak  
Ridge Electric Department.

### Avoid Problems, Plant the Proper Tree

Many of the common problems encountered with trees can be avoided by planting the proper tree .

In selecting the proper tree for a given location, you should consider the eventual size of the tree, the rate of growth, possible interference with utility lines or other structures and the "hardiness " of the tree.

*The National Arbor Day Foundation* has specific recommendations regarding se-

lection of trees on their web site. The site is located at:  
[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

#### *Too Late?*

If the "wrong tree" is planted beneath a power line, the City of Oak Ridge *may* be able to help. In some cases, if a tree must be removed because of power line interference, the City will replace it with a more appropriate tree for the location.



A planting diagram from the National Arbor Day Foundation illustrates the proper planting of various tree species.