

# Fall Is A Great Time To Prune

You may think the approach of the end of the growing season means you can stop worrying about the trees in your landscape. Think again! Fall is one of the best times to examine the safety and health of your trees, say experts in tree care. Why? With the leaves off, cracks, defects and deadwood are easier to see. Also, with winter storms approaching, hazards should be removed now – before they damage property.

“Most trees can be pruned year-round,” says Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, standards & compliance for the Tree Care Industry Association. “And certain operations are easier to do in the fall, when dead branches are easily seen and removed.”

Some homeowners worry that arborists will not be able to determine deadwood on a tree when the leaves are off. “On the contrary,” says Gerstenberger, “This is the best time for an arborists to locate deadwood by looking for changes in color, fungus growth, cracks, and other symptoms that can help them make this determination. Since the leaves are off, the view of the entire tree’s architecture is clear and a thorough check can be performed.”

Pruning is much more than the simple act of sawing off limbs. Proper pruning is an art based on scientific principles of plant physiology. At its most basic level, pruning trees involves removing damaged, dead or structurally weak limbs, which will improve a tree’s health and reduce the chances of personal or property damage caused by falling limbs.

Professional arborists have the capability to make the tree safer and more attractive by pruning live growth as well. **IN SMALL AMOUNTS** proper pruning encourages growth, increases flower and fruit production, improves plant health, repairs damage and helps add aesthetic appeal to a tree. Pruning at the right time and in the right way is critical, since it is possible to kill a tree through neglect or over-pruning. In most cases if it is obvious a tree was cut, it was probably done wrong.

How can a homeowner know if an arborist will prune a tree correctly?

“Ask the arborist if they prune according to the American National Standards Institute standard for tree pruning which is called ANSI A300,” says Gerstenberger. This information can be found on our website @ [www.syvtreecare.com](http://www.syvtreecare.com).

This standard requires that the recommended use of certain tools, cutting techniques, and pruning methods be followed, and sets the standard definitions for terms the arborist will use in your estimate. Properly written work estimates for tree pruning should be written in accordance to ANSI A300 standards. Details should be given as to type of trimming, location and reasoning for types of work on each tree.

In addition to the information given on the work estimate, ANSI A300 sets some guidelines for basic pruning practices that arborists should follow. If arborist are adhering to the ANSI A300 pruning standard, they:

- will not leave branch stubs
- will make few or no heading cuts (cutting limb ends)
- will not cut off the branch collar (not make a flush cut to close to trunk)
- will not top or lion’s tail trees
- will not remove more than 25 percent of the foliage of a single branch
- will not remove more than 25 percent of the total tree foliage in a single year
- will not damage other parts of the tree during pruning
- will not use wound paint (tree seal)

**This information can found on our website [www.syvtreecare.com](http://www.syvtreecare.com)**

Reprinted in Part from an Article in TCIA Magazine

**LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED FROM THE HEART OF SANTA YNEZ  
Professional \* Reliable \* Knowledgeable \*Trustworthy • #1 in Customer Satisfaction**

**SANTA YNEZ VALLEY TREE CARE**

FRED EVANS, OWNER

**805-688-5580 • [WWW.SYVTREECARE.COM](http://WWW.SYVTREECARE.COM)**

**\*\*EMERGENCY SERVICE AVAILABLE\*\***

Member Western Chapter of International Society of Arboriculture  
and Tree Care Industry Association

**License #750949**