

Tree Trimming

Wind toss is a term used by the horticulture industry to describe what happens to a poorly maintained tree in our summer monsoons. If you have properly staked your young tree and moved the drips out just beyond the drip line of the foliage, good for you! You just may have given the tree the advantage it needs to help protect itself from our near hurricane-force winds. Another proven strategy for maintaining the health of a tree is to get really aggressive with the loppers. Your goal should be to remove as much of the canopy as possible to allow those sudden gusts of monsoon fury to pass harmlessly through the tree.

With that said, the following are a few rules of thumb to adhere to when trimming that top heavy tree. Remove any branches that cross one another, potentially creating damage to one or both branches. Take out any dead branches and thin areas where two or more branches are competing for space in the tree. Remove those branches which appear weaker or just do not have the desired shape. When removing a branch, go all the way back to the trunk or “parent” branch and cut flush. Do not forget to make a shallow cut on the underside of the branch being removed, to prevent “stripping” of the bark when the branch turns loose from the tree.

Take your time with this project. Stand back periodically and look at the tree from many different angles, especially from inside the house and at the street. Trim for balance, health, and beauty. While mesquites are the most likely to suffer from wind toss, any tree can suffer if not properly maintained. Since a six to ten-year-old tree can be nearly impossible to replace, pruning is an effort well spent in order to properly maintain these valuable components of our landscape.