

Urban trees often require pruning to maintain clearance for utility services and buildings or to improve the safety, structure, health and beauty of a tree.

Careful consideration should be given to species selection and available space prior to planting any tree. The right tree in the right place may eliminate or reduce the need to prune, representing a significant saving to the tree’s owner.

Outdated pruning techniques such as lopping and topping were once seen as a “means” in which to “control” the growth potential of trees. History has proven that these pruning techniques were unsuccessful and detrimental to the viability of trees due to the failure to recognise the process of compartmentalisation of decay in trees. Lopping and topping is the cutting of branches or stems between branch unions or at internodes on young trees. This is an unacceptable practice for the following reasons:

- It increases the rate of shoot production and elongation.
- The resulting regrowth is weakly attached and become prone to failure or collapse
- The stubs decay
- The natural habitat of the tree is destroyed
- It may reduce the lifespan of the tree
- It predisposes trees to fungal infections and insect attack
- Is uneconomically viable to the customer as trees generally required removal when lopped.

An Australian Standard “Pruning of Amenity Trees” AS4373-2007 has been produced by Standards Australia.

This production is aimed at Arborists, Tree Maintenance Contractors and Local Government Officers to bring uniformity to the industry using up to date, sound arboricultural techniques. Council consent for the pruning of trees protected by Wollongong City Tree Management Order requires that pruning is undertaken in accordance of AS4373-2007. Failure to prune in accordance with AS4373-2007 is considered a breach of the Wollongong City Council’s Tree Management Order.

The standard promotes two (2) types of pruning Crown Maintenance and Crown Reducing the area of the crown while retaining the structure and size of the tree.

Crown modification is pruning that changes the structural appearance and habit of the tree.

The following table shows the pruning types and classes contained within.

PRUNING TYPES, CLASSES AND SUITABILITY

PRUNING TYPE: CROWN MAINTENANCE

Class	Code *	Species restrictions	Clause
General Pruning	G	A	8.1
Thinning	T	A	8.2
Deadwooding	D	A	8.3
Selective Pruning	S	A	8.4
Formative Pruning	F	A	8.5

PRUNING TYPE: CROWN MODIFICATION

Class	Code *	Species restrictions	Clause
Reduction Pruning	R	R	9.1
Crown Lifting	C	A	9.2
Pollarding	P	DF	9.3
Remedial Pruning	H	C	9.4
Line Clearance	L	A	9.5

* The code is a symbol to represent class in the same row of the Table to the left. It is intended to be a useful way of referring to classes of pruning when writing specifications.

LEGEND

- A Pruning type is suited to all species
- R Pruning type is restricted to trees with suitable secondary branches
- D Pruning type is suited only to deciduous trees
- F Pruning type is suitable only to trees formatively pruned to achieve the required result
- C carried out only on damaged, declining or diseased trees.

Quotations obtained for proposed pruning work should nominate pruning type ie; Crown Maintenance or Crown Modification and the specific class or pruning to be undertaken.

Copies of AS4373-2007 can be purchased from:

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Note: The information contained in this Fact Sheet is based on AS4373-2007. Permission to reprint has been given by Standards Australia

Disclaimers

This information was believed to be correct at the date of its publication.

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