

25 Ways to Kill a Tree



Few residential trees die of "old age." Mechanical damage and improper tree care kill more trees than any insects or diseases. Avoid making the tree-damaging mistakes shown in the diagram below. Few of these items alone would kill a tree, but multiple problems will certainly stress, and could eventually kill, a tree.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Top" tree to encourage watersprouts that weaken tree and encourage pests. 2. Leave co-dominant leaders to encourage "V" growth and splitting during winds and storms. 3. Leave crossing branches to rub protective bark and create wounds. 4. Ignore insect or disease damage. 5. Coat pruning cuts with paint or sealer to slow healing and promote pest problems. 6. Leave broken branches unpruned to encourage pests. 7. Spray unapproved herbicides over tree root area to weaken tree. 8. Damage roots and trunk with lawn equipment. 9. Rip through roots when digging trenches. 10. Plant close to house or obstacle to reduce adequate tree and root growing space. 11. Attach items to tree to damage bark and girdle branches with wire and rope. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Prune randomly to leave branch "stubs." 13. Prune flush cuts to reduce wound closure. 14. Leave tree staked until guy wire girdles trunk. 15. Leave wrap on to constrict trunk growth and rot bark. 16. Pile up excessive mulch to encourage rodent damage and bark rot. 17. Put non-porous black plastic under gravel or mulch. 18. Stack items atop roots to cause soil compaction. 19. Ignore damage from pests. 20. Plant near downspout to assure excessive water or water lightly to encourage shallow root growth. 21. Leave top of wire basket in place to girdle roots. 22. Leave in container to prevent root growth. 23. Dig hole too narrow and over amend backfill to discourage proper root spread. 24. Dig hole too deep or fill with gravel to collect water and drown roots. 25. Remove more than 25% of living branches/foliage annually. |
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