



BAD HABITS TO AVOID

1. Grass up to the base of the tree

With grass comes mowing and this means the increased likelihood of mechanical damage to the roots and/or trunk of the tree by either a lawnmower or weed whacker. Creating a Tree ring around of the base of your tree prevents damage and also keeps the soil moist and is a way to provide the tree with nutrients. They can also add another dimension to your landscaping. Ask PTS about installing tree rings today!

2. Cutting roots

Cutting roots can be bad for a tree for multiple reasons. The first being that when you cut roots you decrease the amount of area that the tree now collects nutrients and water from increasing the stress level of the tree. Second, is that you remove the support system of the tree and make it much more susceptible to failing. Third, the cut roots will allow fungus, other diseases, and decay into the base of the tree compromising both the nutrient-collecting capabilities and the structural strength of the tree. Let PTS know if you have any construction plans and we can help make sure that your trees make it through with as little stress as possible.

3. Burying roots

When you bury the roots you do two things. First, you prevent the proper amount of water from percolating down to the roots, making the tree more stressed, especially in the summer months. You will also compact the soil making it more difficult for oxygen to get to the roots which it needs to absorb nutrients. Every case is different on how deep is too deep, but PTS can help you find a way to make your landscaping ideas work.

4. Mulching all the way up the trunk

Placing mulch on the base of the tree will increase the amount of moisture that is retained right up against the bark which can lead to more fungus growing on the tree. Always make sure that the mulch is not piled right next to the base of the tree.

5. Girdling limbs/trunks

Placing bird feeders and hammocks on trees are two great ways to enjoy your yard but doing them correctly can make sure that you do not do any damage to your trees. Ensuring that you use soft attachments on the limbs and also making sure that you do not let the branch get constricted by the obstruction are two ways to make sure that you don't harm your trees.

6. Improper pruning of limbs

Improper pruning can lead to the introduction of decay, water sprouts, or improper structure of your trees. Making sure you make the right cut at the right place at the right time will ensure that you will maintain the health of your trees.



7. Over-watering

Over-watering will not only decrease the absorption of minerals, but also make your trees more susceptible to drought and in some cases, more likely to get knocked over in a storm.

8. Topping

Topping is a practice that is incredibly destructive for your trees. We will never recommend topping as part of a tree health plan. See the "Why Topping Is Bad" section for more information.

9. Planting in the wrong spot

Location is the **most** important thing you can decide when you are planting a tree. The goal is to make sure that you are picking an appropriate spot for what you want to plant. You want to make sure that the tree that you are planting has enough room to reach maturity without coming in contact with any obstacles. You do not want to plant a Norway Spruce next to your front door, nor should you plant a Birch tree right under the power lines. Making the right first step will ensure a much less expensive and rewarding experience.

10. Construction Damage

Construction damage is one of the easiest ways to stress your trees without realizing it. Everything from soil compaction, mechanical damage, environmental poisoning, and nutrient leaching are possible when working around trees. Let PTS help you devise a plan to make sure that workers do not do irreversible damage to your trees.

COTTONWOODS

Cottonwoods are the largest trees that grow in Alaska outside of southeast Alaska. Most people you ask will tell you that cottonwoods are nothing but messy and destructive trees. Cottonwoods do have very aggressive roots that will lift driveways and press on foundations. Because they are a very wet-tolerant tree found along streams and other riparian areas, their roots will try to find their way into foundations in search of moisture.

The most important thing about cottonwood to consider is location. Right next to your driveway, fence, or house is not going to be an ideal spot for these trees. They grow at an incredible rate and can add upwards of an inch of diameter a year.

They can also be extremely beneficial trees if they are planted or allowed to grow correctly. They can act as fantastic shade trees and also wonderfully large trees to base a landscape around. Also, since they do love water, they are capable of consuming over 200 gallons a day during the summer. This can greatly improve the drainage of a property and needs to be taken into consideration before removing a larger tree.

After removing a tree, the stump should be poisoned to prevent the tree from re-sprouting. You need to be careful about other cottonwood trees in the area because the roots can graft together from other cottonwood trees causing the poison to be transferred to a remaining tree.



1. Topping Stresses Trees

When PTS prunes your trees we never remove more than 1/3 of the live foliage on the tree. Since the leaves are the energy generators of a tree, removing them limits the amount of energy that the tree can produce. Also, the tree stores a lot of its reserved energy in starches in wood. Topping therefore not only stresses the tree, but makes it more difficult to recover from that stress.

2. Causes Decay

Anytime you make a cut on a tree, you are opening a wound. PTS recommends early pruning because that translates into smaller wounds that are easier for the tree to recover from. Topping normally requires large cuts that are very difficult, if not impossible, for the tree to heal over.

3. Creates a Hazard

When the tree pushes growth back from the large topping cuts it will most likely be with many shoots growing quickly upwards called water sprouts. These sprouts will continue to grow until they start to choke out the smaller ones which make for a very weak attachment for the branches that are left. This leads to a much greater chance of failing either under snow load or high winds.

4. Not Aesthetically pleasing

When a tree is topped, it looks more like a hat rack than it does anything Mother Nature intended. Large limbs ending in little tufts of foliage do not compliment any landscape and it can take decades for a tree to recover and look natural again.

5. Cost

When you top a tree, it is the first step in a very long process to maintain what you have started. Trees will try to recover by pushing out lots of new growth which then has to be maintained within the next year or two. Also, if the tree does not recover, then you are stuck calling someone back to remove, a now hazardous, dead tree.

PTS always works with your long-term goals in mind to make sure you do not end up spending more money than you have to. Topping is never going to be the solution. Normally it creates more problems than it solves. Contact us today and we will work with you to achieve your goals.

6. Stress: Old v. New

Older trees do not recover as quickly from pruning as younger trees do. The general rule of thumb is that it takes 1 year per inch of diameter of a tree to recover from a stress. That's why we recommend early structural pruning to prevent the need for large cuts later in the tree's life. Maintaining the health of your trees from the beginning will make sure that you don't run into avoidable problems in the future.