

The Tree Topping Story

Pictures speak louder than words



1. March 2001, time to top those crape myrtles so they will bloom this year, Right? Wrong! Follow these two trees, of identical size before March 2001, as they show what topping really does for a tree.



2. While the leaf buds have opened fully on one tree, the other is struggling because most of its leaf buds were cut off a month ago. It has to use its stored energy to produce new twigs and leaves.



3. June 2001, trees should be in full leaf. Ready to bloom. Well, one tree is, the other is still working on those leaves and twigs.



4. OK, time to bloom. Oh wait, one tree is still trying to replace those missing leaves. Knowing it should bloom it manages to eek out a few flower heads.

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5. October 2001. Well, the work is over for this year. Except that the topped tree didn't get back to its original size. So it still needs more leaves and twigs. Well, there's always next year. Crape are survivors!



6. New year, new possibilities. Any good crape should be able to recover and bloom after a year, right?



7. One year after the original cuts were made and the tree still hasn't recovered. More time is needed. And notice the shape of the topped tree, it will need corrective pruning to restore its natural shape.



8. OK, it's been a year and a half. What is wrong with this picture? Nothing, it's just the simple truth that topping harms trees. Some trees, like crape myrtles eventually recover. Some don't. Don't abuse your trees. If you want to top something, make it your lawn.