

## RESIDENTS: FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### What Is "Topping"?

Ever notice trees in your neighborhood whose branches have been cut to stubs, causing them to look like sheared shrubs? These trees have been improperly topped. If you want healthy and safe trees, these examples of senseless destruction may provoke anger and disgust.

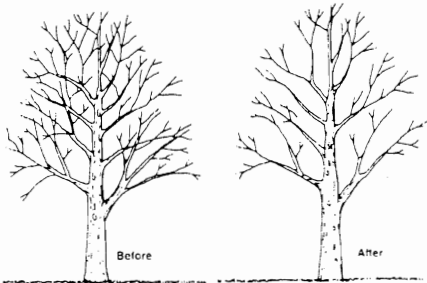
Topping is the indiscriminate and drastic cutting of a tree branch or branches. It has been referred to as heading, stubbing, tipping, lopping, round-over, and dehorning. No matter what the name, topping disfigures trees and is detrimental to tree structure, health, and value. Trees are topped because they grow too large for the places where they were planted, or people become afraid of their large size. Trees are topped because proper tree pruning methods are not used.

### Topping Hurts a Tree in Many Ways

Topping removes a tree's food production factory (leaves) and food stored in limbs that are cut. Topping also causes a tree to use valuable food stored in the trunk and roots to regrow limbs and branches. This makes for an *unhealthy tree*. Topping redistributes the use of energy and has a substantial impact on the physiology of a tree. Although debated, topping also can place a tree under stress and affect its tolerance to further injury.

The drastic removal of limbs by topping exposes remaining limbs to sunshine. This sudden exposure to light and heat can kill or damage a tree's living tissue (the bark and cambium) and is called sunscald. Trees have difficulty protecting themselves from sunscald and large wounds that result from the topping. These sunscald wounds are highly vulnerable to *insect invasion* and the spores and actions of decay fungi.

Topping causes the quick growth of dense, weak, upright branches called watersprouts. Sprouts caused by topping are often weakly attached. The tree may become an *unsafe structure*. They grow so rapidly a tree can regain its original height in a short time with a dense and unwieldy crown.

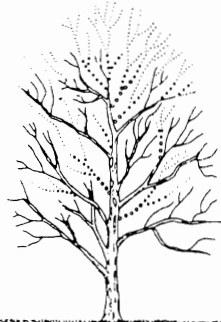


*Proper pruning enhances and protects the natural shape of the tree.*

Topping replaces the natural form and beauty of a tree with unsightly branch stubs, large wounds and unhealthy branches. What was once a beautiful tree *can become very ugly*. Because of the negative impact on appearance, structure and health, the value of the tree is at risk. Topping can reduce the value of a large ornamental tree by thousands of dollars. In the most severe cases, *topping may lead to the death of a tree*.

### REMINDER

Our recently passed Ordinance No. 420 clearly spells out the specific guidelines of trimming trees along sidewalks, roadways and alleys. If you have any questions please call the Borough Office or Shade Tree Commissioner, Bill Krupa. Violators will be fined up to \$600.00.



### How to Prevent Topping

To prevent tree topping you must plant the right tree in the proper place. Plant tree species that fit and will thrive in the places where they are planted. Don't plant large trees such as oaks, tulip poplar, and sycamore under power lines, in small tree lawn areas, in sidewalk cutouts, or close to buildings or signs. Because of vigorous growth of sprouts, topping makes utility line clearance more difficult, more frequent and more expensive. Most utilities use an arboriculturally correct method called directional pruning instead of topping. Directional pruning directs subsequent growth away from wires and leaves no branch stubs.

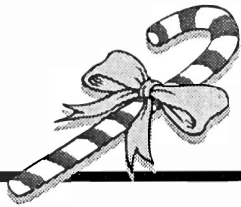
The most important time to prune trees is in the first 5 to 10 years. Proper pruning of young trees promotes correct development of structure, saves money by removing branches when they are small and keeps pruning wounds small. All pruning should be performed in accordance with tree maintenance Arboriculture Society standards. Insist that thinning cuts and natural target pruning techniques are used. Do not blindly accept the lowest price. In tree work, the old adage "you get what you pay for" is usually true. Ask for customer references and proof of liability insurance and worker's compensation insurance.

Buy quality nursery stock. To assure success when planting landscape trees, it is important to start with a healthy plant that has good structural form. Always hire a qualified arborist. Although tree topping may cost less and take less time, do not pay for inferior service.

### Plant Trees for Big Energy Savings

Planting trees today may well mean dollars in your pocket tomorrow. A few well-placed trees will provide shade in the summer that can reduce air conditioning costs from 15 to 35 percent or more. In fact, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, if enough shade street trees were planted in suburban areas and commercial districts, the "heat island" effect of cities would be significantly reduced. Heat islands are zones of the landscape that are dominated by buildings and pavement and commonly have air temperatures many degrees higher than areas such as parks, rural land or well-shaded neighborhoods. Heat islands are expanding with the spread of cities and shopping malls. As a result, the temperature difference accounts for an estimated 3 to 8 percent of all urban electric use, costing over \$1 billion yearly. Planting trees to reduce the "heat island" reduces cooling costs, and also reduces pollution.





# Borough Happenings

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Fall / Winter 2001/02

## Borough Happenings!

The leaves are falling, the clocks have been turned back. These changes mean one thing: winter is moving in very fast. Over the summer, Borough employees completed 8 curb cuts for the handicapped. There are 16 curb cuts left to do to comply with ADA. Additional sewer line work will be scheduled for next spring and summer. About 10 to 12 catch basins were rebuilt this past year; more will be done in 2002. Council has prepared the 2002 budget. Once again the real estate taxes remain at 22 mills. The sewer maintenance fee and garbage fee will remain the same. Council is in the process of changing the old signs that mark the entrances to the Borough. The new signs will hopefully be installed over the winter months. They are bright blue and yellow in color. Council has also decided to paint the Borough building next spring. Bids will be advertised in March. Some brick work was done on the Borough Building this fall. A new sign will be added to the front of the Municipal Building in the spring. With snow coming, residents are reminded to shovel to the right of your driveway to avoid snow plowed back into the driveway. And, once again, **DO NOT SHOVEL SNOW INTO STREETS.**

**Residents:** Here are some tips for deterring skunks from around your house. Mix 8 oz. of castor oil, 8 oz. of dish detergent, and 1 gallon of water. Simply spray area where there are skunks. Also, a few droplets of bleach in your garbage bag keeps animals and birds out of your trash. If all else fails, you can call Ehrlich Pest Control. There is a charge for removal of skunks, raccoons, etc.

## Mayor's Desk - Reminder:

Southmont adopted Ord. #419 prohibiting dogs, cats and other animals from running at large. Fines will be imposed and you will be required to pay \$35.00 to recoup your animal.

With the beginning of the new year 2002, Southmont will have a new mayor and councilman. Mr. Gerald Sloat has been elected Mayor and Mr. Bruce Graham as Councilman. Mr. William Krupa, Mr. Richard Rodgers and Professor William Kory have been reelected to Council. Mr. Neil Quinn has also been reelected to serve as Tax Collector. Congratulations to everyone! Mayor Lary Koval and Councilman Ronald Rovanseck did not run for reelection. The Borough wishes them well and a special thank you for their service to the residents of Southmont.

## From the Fire Department

Members of the Southmont VFD wish everyone a safe and happy holiday. We hope you took a few extra minutes to insure safety. Did you change your batteries in your smoke detectors? Did you check your chimney to insure it is clean and free of debris? Did you check your lights and extension cords to insure proper operation? Your holiday will be a lot safer if you follow these few short reminders. This past year has been one of growth for the Fire Department. Several new members have been recruited.

A new pickup truck was purchased for general utility purposes. Several members received State and National certifications for fire service. The Department was recognized by the PA Office of the State Fire Commission for having numerous members certified in National Professional Qualifications Standards.

The Fire Department lost our chief of 16 years, Mike Butler. Mike accepted an out-of-town position in fire service. Mike was chosen over several other candidates due to the skills and expertise he acquired while he was a member of the Southmont VFD. Mr. Chet Borosky, a 20 year resident, has taken over as Fire Chief.

The Southmont Fire Department is always looking for new members. If you are interested, please call the Southmont Volunteer Fire Department at 255-2633.

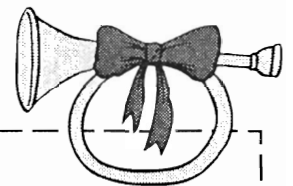
## RECYCLING NEWS

This year our cost for recycling has increased due to the fact that some residents are discarding nonrecyclable items in the bins. Recently we have had window glass, mirror glass and blue glass in the clear glass bins. The entire bin is contaminated, and therefore the Borough must pay because of the contamination. This is in violation of the Recycling Ordinance and subject to fines. Employees spend valuable time sorting the bins to eliminate the items not allowed. Council has considered installing surveillance cameras. These extra costs may eventually be passed on to the residents. **RECYCLING PROPERLY MEANS A SAVINGS TO YOU. PLEASE DO NOT JEOPARDIZE OUR PROGRAM.**

The annual garbage fee will remain at \$70.00 for 2002. Newspaper collections will be March 30, June 1, August 17, and October 19, 2002. Spring 2002 Clean-up will be May 15th and May 16th in conjunction with your regular garbage pick-up. Watch newspaper for schedule. Batteries, tires, auto and truck parts, construction materials and liquids are excluded. No appliances with freon can be picked up. All yard and shrub trimmings must be tied in 3-foot bundles. If you have any questions, please call Waste Management at 479-4011. A reminder will be published in the newspaper.

Recycling hours are 7:00 A.M. to dusk Monday through Saturday. Closed Thursdays 7 A.M. until 11:00 A.M. Use outside bins provided for plastic bags. Glass must be separated. Rinse cans and plastics. Compress plastics. Ordinance 389 provides for fines of up to \$300.00. for contaminating and littering.

*Thanks for participating!*



## PLEASE CLIP & SAVE

Newspaper recycling in 2002 will be done on March 30th, June 1st, August 17th and October 19th, 8 A.M. till noon only, at the Borough Building. Newspapers must be bundled. Waste Management will be doing the Spring Clean-up collection, thru 2003. For the year 2002 Spring Clean-up will be May 15th and 16th, with your regular weekly collection. If you have any questions you can call Waste Management at 479-4011. Crack sealing will be done sometime in April 2002. Brush cleanup is done the third week of October. **NO GRASS OR LEAVES WILL BE PICKED UP WITH THE BRUSH. AT NO TIME should you rake yard waste and twigs into the street. Bundle twigs and place out with your garbage.**

WATCH NEWSPAPER FOR SCHEDULES.



## Tree City USA Tips

Planting trees can be a very personal act, or a family project, or something you do with a school or with your community. In any case, we tree planters can't resist taking personal satisfaction in admiring what we've brought forth from the soil as we watch trees grow. However, no matter how much we individually benefit from the trees we plant, there is no such thing as a "personal" tree. For every tree you plant, it benefits the world. Trees that beautify your home also beautify your neighborhood as well as the community in which you live. Your trees provide oxygen and help clean the air that everyone breathes. The migratory songbirds that your trees shelter may even be shared by people in other communities. And the trees you plant will be a gift to future generations, each growing more valuable through the years. Imagine your world without trees or birds.

## Arbor Day / Make Your Mark

It has been written that "while other holidays repose upon the past, Arbor Day proposes for the future." We all, to a large extent, share in the common yearnings to make a mark on the future, to say "I was here; I made a difference." That small touch of immortality is the rich reward enjoyed by the many friends who have made planned gifts for our future. These gifts have strengthened our ability to assist the tree planters and wise environmental stewards of tomorrow.

## Winter Survival

When choosing a tree to plant, think about the wildlife in your area. Seeds, nuts, fruit and insects can provide winter food for birds and other wildlife. Squirrels rely on acorns from the pin oak for winter survival. In the case of birds you want to plant trees and shrubs that retain their fruits well into the winter months. Some trees produce seeds that birds can find in the snow or on the ground.

Trees that provide plenty of seeds, nuts and acorns include: Ashes, Birches, Maples and Spruce for seeds. For acorns and nuts: Butternut, Oaks, Hickories, and Chestnuts. Remember, if you have a large property with plenty of space where you can leave dead trees that pose no hazard, we suggest you leave them. Dead trees are the "lunchbox" and possibly a place for the cavity nesters or den makers to call home. Woodpecker groups love this environment.

## When Trees Are Young

Many trees are killed right from the start. Nationwide, about 20 percent of all new street trees die soon after being planted. Some die quickly, usually from someone on the planting crew allowing the roots to dry out in the sun or wind before planting.

Experts estimate that if a street is planted correctly it will grow twice as fast and live at least twice as long as one that is incorrectly planted. In past issues we have told you about proper planting. Remember to gently remove the wires, cord or wire from the planting ball. Always backfill with native soil. Water the soil to settle rather than packing the soil. Stake loosely only if necessary, but no longer than a year.

In dry spells, water the entire area around your new tree. If you must stake your tree allow room for normal sway in the wind. This aids root development and strengthens the trunk. Cover wires with rubber or plastic to protect the bark. Keep all vines away from the tree. Cut existing vines and peel them away from the bark. Keep soil pores open with mulching around individual trees or by planting groups of trees in flower/ground-cover beds.

## Mulching

Mulching is the placing of bark, wood chips, decorative gravel or other materials on the soil around trees. This can greatly enhance the tree's health if not piled too deeply (approximately two inches depth is recommended). Mulching helps retain moisture, control weeds and grass, reduce erosion, improve appearance and prevent soil compaction. Keep grass away from the tree by proper mulching so lawnmower or trimmer damage is less likely. Don't use your tree for a hitching post for your family pet. Most organic mulches can improve soil structure as they decompose.

## Topping

Remove no more than 1/3 of the live crown of the tree in a single year. Be sure to retain a single, central leader. Overpruning and tree topping is the single most killer of trees. If you have any questions on tree trimming and tree care please call Bill Krupa, Shade Tree Commissioner. Letters, along with a copy of Ordinance #69, will be sent to residents who continue to "top" trees in the Borough Right of Way. Violation of Ordinance #69 will lead to fines.

## Tree Sponsorship

While the fall produced a beautiful display of color, the barren trees now look sad. During the winter months the trees will continue to grow and prepare for the long awaited spring and summer. And then, once again, the tree-lined streets of Southmont will produce a grand display. The thoughtfulness of area residents provides for the wonderful show of nature's benefits. This past year contributions were received from Renee Ahlstrom in memory of Madeleine Boussard-Cump, Mr. and Mrs. William Carstensen planted a tree in memory of Irene Carstensen. Phyllis and Howard Forman and Mr. and Mrs. Dorothy Glass contributed to the Borough's Urban Forest project. Contributions over \$100.00 are added to our Shade Tree Contribution Plaque displayed in the Municipal Building. Contributions provide a lasting memory and a visible reminder of your caring for family or friends, living or deceased. Thanks for all your support.

## Arbor Day 2002

The Shade Tree Commission is in the process of completing an annual inventory of street trees in the Borough. The Shade Tree Commission is looking for any groups or residents who might have some suggestions for the celebration. *Southmont Borough will once again be honored with the 2002 Tree City USA award for the 12th year.* Anyone interested in participating in the May 4, 2002, Arbor Day celebration please call the Borough office and leave your name and number. Mr. Krupa will be in touch with you.

## Holiday Wishes

*The Borough of Southmont Council, Staff and Employees wish all residents a joyous holiday season. We are grateful for our many blessings, and as a Municipality we stand together and remember all the people who are fighting for our nation.*

Did you ever notice that people want the front of the bus, the back of the church and the center of attention?

"PATIENCE"

*Have a Wonderful and Safe Holiday Season.*