

Should You Trim a Tree This Way?

Q: I had someone trim some low branches on my trees and this is what it looks like when he finished. I don't think they're supposed to have a little stub like that are they?



A: No, the stub should not be there as it will eventually rot and possibly allow harmful bacteria and/or insects into the tree's internal structure. This appears to be an oak or a maple tree. You will see what appears to be a "collar" around the base of the remaining part of the limb.

According to UT Publication 1619, "Best Management Practices for Pruning Landscape Trees, Shrubs and Ground Covers," trim the rest of the limb off just above the "collar." Use a clean, sharp pruner or pruning saw and avoid leaving jagged edges. This will allow the tree to heal properly.

Cutting into the 'collar' and leaving rough edges will slow the healing process.

Also, Publication 1619 does NOT recommend the use of pruning sealers on cuts such as these. This practice also interferes with trees' natural healing process.

Trimming and pruning of trees and is a process that many feel they can do without harm to their plants. If not performed correctly and at the right time of year, irreparable harm can occur to your trees and shrubs. The above publication (PB1619) and University of Georgia Publication PB 1065_6, "Care of Ornamental Plants in the Landscape," can help you keep your plants healthy and in "good shape."