

Tree Sucker Removal

Q: How do I get rid of all the Crepe Myrtle and Bradford Pear suckers that are coming up around these trees?

A: In brief, cut the Crape Myrtle and Bradford Pear suckers at the base of the tree with some sharp pruners as close to the ground as possible during the summer. If the suckers are from a tree you recently have cut down, keep mowing them down before they have a chance to leaf out.

Crape Myrtles: Crape Myrtle trees are beautiful during their flowering season and are a great addition to your landscape when planted in the right location. Recall our past columns about planting the right tree in the right place. There is also confusion about how to prune and shape a Crape Myrtle. This often results in “Crape Murder”. These plants should be considered as trees and pruned properly. UT recommends pruning them in March to help shape the tree for summer growing. Please check out this UT Institute of Agriculture webpage that outlines the proper pruning method with a link to a video from the PBS show “The Family Plot”: <https://bess.tennessee.edu/proper-crape-myrtle-pruning/>.

Bradford Pears: There are many opinions on growing Bradford Pears. Due to their invasive nature, some states considering a ban the sale of these trees.

We hope this information is helpful and you can nip those suckers early.

The Master Gardeners of Northeast Tennessee