

Just say no to lopping

By now you will be starting to get the feeling that lopping is bad. That's right kids, don't do it. But what is meant by lopping?

A qualified Arborist should prune to the Australian Standards 4373-2007 *Pruning of Amenity Trees*. This is not meant to be a "how to" manual, but a general list of acceptable practices. It underpins knowledge that your Arborist will have gained while undertaking their training. It is generally accepted that in a healthy mature tree no more than 20% of live foliage should be removed at any one time. There are other factors to take into consideration: the age of the tree, its general health, structure and species are the main ones. Sometimes 20% would be considered too much to reduce in one event and would potentially cause unwarranted stress to the tree with flow on negative effects. Pruning should also be done in such a way that a branch is terminated back to a growth point (another branch) which is at least 1/3 the diameter of what is being cut.

Lopping is the practice of removing excessive amounts of live foliage, not cutting to a growth point and generally not heeding the trees natural shape, form or species growth. A prime example of this would be a 25m Eucalyptus being cut to 8m.

A client may request a tree be lopped for a variety of reasons. The most common reason we get is a client wanting to retain a tree that is too big for a space and wanting to keep it to a certain height. Ideally if a tree is too big or a poor selection for the space in which it resides rather than lopping, removal should be recommended with a better suited replacement tree planted in its place.