



# Maui Green & Beautiful

*Caring for the Āina  
Through Preservation, Protection & Education*

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## **Testimony For CPAC November 16, 2022 Agenda –Section 2 Policy Framework & Goal 2.2**

### **Safe. Healthy, livable communities for all**

By Elaine Malina, ISA Certified Arborist since 1997, Maui Green & Beautiful past president & current board member, MALP past president & current member, past member of the Maui County arborist committee, UH Agricultural Leadership program graduate, landscaping career on Maui since 1983.

### **Section 2 Policy Framework 2.2**

**2.2.10**-recoommendation to define the term “shade”-refer to the Maui County Planting Plan (MCPPI)-size of tree canopy and proper pruning standards.

**2.2.12**-recommendation to strongly include proper pruning –refer to the MCPPI and the International Society of Arboriculture pruning standards-ANSI A300. Correct pruning is the answer for trees to obtain full canopy & create optimum shade.

### **Goal 2.2**

**2.01**-additional -is the replanting & planting of Maui Veteran’s Highway –trees along bike path to create shade & beautification and the planting of the center median with shrubs to beautify and lesson night glare of on-coming traffic.

**2.02**-additional -to define the guidelines of care & long-time commitment of trees & landscape plants in the adoption program.

**2.04**-additional- to define the guidelines of care & long-time commitment of trees & landscape plant for stewardship hui or community organizations.

**2.10**-strongly support the preservation of the wili wili forest and cultural resources which is important for the community now & the future.

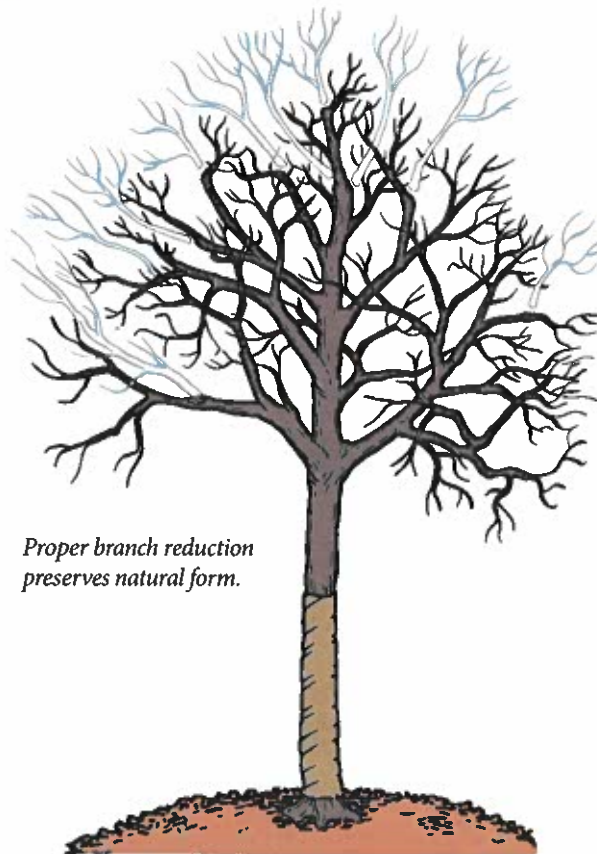
**2.12** –to add as an important community resource –trees combating climate change. Possibly using 2 designations- Exceptional Trees and Community trees.

**2.13**-The use of <https://www.itreetools.org/> and future proposal of a permit process for trees that are a certain caliber before they are pruned or removed because of their importance & benefits to the community tree canopy plan.

**2.14**-to propose instead of the Maui County Arborist Committee because the committee has a full list of duties and limited meeting times. This proposal should go under the Maui County Arborist (s) and the future division of community forestry that may be under the Public Works Department where current Maui County arborist position are is. Existing organizations that train arborists are the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and Aloha Arborist Association in the state of Hawaii. Additional training can always be used but education plus enforcement (Including stronger ordinances) is important of maintaining full canopy trees.

*Thank you all for your time on the South Maui Community Plan Advisory committee. It’s exciting to see all the positive plans especially in the importance of our natural resources especially our trees.*

# Why Topping Hurts Trees



*Proper branch reduction preserves natural form.*

## Alternatives to Topping

Sometimes a tree must be reduced in height or spread, such as for providing utility line clearance. There are recommended techniques for doing so. Small branches should be removed back to their point of origin. If a larger limb must be shortened, it should be pruned back to a lateral branch that is large enough (at least one-third the diameter of the limb being removed) to assume the terminal role. This method of branch reduction helps to preserve the natural form of the tree. However, if large

cuts are involved, the tree may not be able to close over and compartmentalize the wounds. Sometimes the best solution is to remove the tree and replace it with a species that is more appropriate for the site.

This brochure is one in a series published by the International Society of Arboriculture as part of its Consumer Information Program. You may have additional interest in the following titles currently in the series:

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| Avoiding Tree and Utility Conflicts      | Pruning Mature Trees                       |
| Avoiding Tree Damage During Construction | Pruning Young Trees                        |
| Benefits of Trees                        | Recognizing Tree Risk                      |
| Buying High-Quality Trees                | Treatment of Trees Damaged by Construction |
| Insect and Disease Problems              | Tree Selection and Placement               |
| Mature Tree Care                         | Trees and Turf                             |
| New Tree Planting                        | Tree Values                                |
| Plant Health Care                        | Why Hire an Arborist                       |
| Proper Mulching Techniques               | Why Topping Hurts Trees                    |
| Palms                                    |  |

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Through research, technology, and education, the International Society of Arboriculture promotes the professional practice of arboriculture and fosters a greater worldwide awareness of the benefits of trees. For further information, contact: ISA, P.O. Box 3129, Champaign, IL 61826-3129, U.S.



Learn why topping is not an acceptable pruning technique and discover recommended alternatives.





ing is perhaps the most harmful tree pruning practice on. Yet, despite more than 25 years of literature and nars explaining its harmful effects, topping remains a mon practice.



**What is Topping?**  
 Topping is the indiscriminate cutting of tree trunks to stubs or to lateral branches that are large enough to assume the terminal role. Other names for topping include "heading," "topping," "hat-racking," "rounding over."  
 Topping is often used to reduce the size of a tree. Some owners may feel a tree has become too large for his or her property, or that tall



Topping is cutting branches back to stubs or lateral branches not large enough to sustain the remaining branch.

trees may pose an unacceptable risk. Topping, however, is not a viable method of height reduction and certainly does not reduce future risk. In fact, topping will increase risk in the long term.

**Topping Stresses Trees**

Topping can remove 50 to 100 percent of a tree's leaf-bearing crown. Leaves are the food factories of a tree. Removing them can temporarily starve a tree and trigger various survival mechanisms. Dormant buds are activated, forcing the rapid growth of multiple shoots below each cut. The tree needs to put out a new crop of leaves as soon as possible. If a tree does not have the stored energy reserves to do so, it will be seriously weakened and may die.

A stressed tree with large, open pruning wounds is more vulnerable to insect and disease infestations. The tree may lack sufficient energy to chemically defend the wounds against invasion, and some insects are actually attracted to the chemical signals trees release.

**Topping Leads to Decay**

Correct pruning cuts are made just beyond the branch collar at the point of attachment. The tree is biologically equipped to close such a wound, provided the tree is healthy enough and the wound is not too large. Cuts made indiscriminately between lateral branches create stubs or wounds that the tree may not be able to close. The exposed wood



Leaving a stub maintains an open pathway to decay.

tissues begin to decay. Normally, a tree will "wall off," or compartmentalize, the decaying tissues, but few trees can defend the multiple severe wounds caused by topping. The decay organisms are given a free path to move down through the branches.

**Topping Can Lead to Sunburn**

Branches in the tree's crown produce thousands of leaves to absorb sunlight. When the leaves are removed, the remaining branches and trunk are suddenly exposed to high levels of light and heat. The result may be sunburn of the tissues beneath the bark, which can lead to cankers, bark splitting, and death of some branches.

**Topping Can Lead to Unacceptable Risk**

The survival mechanism that causes a tree to produce multiple shoots below each topping cut comes at great expense to the tree. These shoots develop from buds near the surface of the old branches. Unlike normal branches that develop in a socket of overlapping wood tissues, these new shoots are anchored only in the outermost layers of the parent branches and are weakly attached.

The new shoots grow quickly, as much as 20 feet (6 m) in one year in some species. Unfortunately, the shoots are prone to breaking, especially during windy or icy conditions. While the original goal was to reduce risk by reducing height, risk of limb failure has now increased.



New shoots develop profusely below a topping cut.

**Topping Ruins Natural Form**

The natural branching structure of a tree is a biological wonder. Trees form a variety of shapes and growth habits, all with the same goal of presenting their leaves to the sun. Topping removes the ends of the branches, often leaving ugly stubs. Topping destroys the natural form of a tree. Without leaves (for up to 6 months of the year in temperate climates), a topped tree appears disfigured and mutilated. With leaves, it is a dense ball of foliage, lacking its simple grace. A tree that has been topped can never fully regain its natural form.

**Topping Has Hidden Costs**

The cost of topping a tree is not limited to only the job cost. Some hidden costs of topping include:

- Increased maintenance costs. If the tree survives, it will likely require corrective pruning more frequently (e.g., crown reduction or storm damage repair). If the tree dies, it will have to be removed.
- Reduced property value. Healthy, well-maintained trees can add 10 to 20 percent to the value of a property. Disfigured, topped trees are considered an impending expense.
- Increased liability potential. Topped trees may pose an unacceptable level of risk. Because topping is considered an unacceptable pruning practice, any damage caused by branch failure of a topped tree may lead to a finding of negligence in a court of law.



# Tree Values

3) **Condition.** The professional will also consider the condition of the plant. Obviously, a healthy, well-maintained plant has a higher value. Roots, trunk, branches, and buds need to be inspected.

4) **Location.** Functional considerations are important. A tree in your yard may be worth more than one growing in the woods. A tree standing alone often has a higher value than one in a group. A tree near your house or one that is a focal point in your landscape tends to have greater value. The site, placement, and contribution of a tree to the overall landscape help determine the overall value of the plant attributable to location.

All of these factors may be measurable in dollars and cents. They can determine the value of a tree, specimen shrubs, or evergreens, whether for insurance purposes, court testimony in lawsuits, or tax deductions.

## Checklist

These steps should be taken before and after any casualty loss to your trees and landscape. Taking them can improve the value of your investment in nature's green, growing gifts and prevent financial loss should they be damaged or destroyed.

- Plan your landscaping for both beauty and functional value.
- Protect and preserve to maintain value.
- Take pictures of trees and other landscape plants now while they are healthy and vigorous. Pictures make "before and after" comparisons easier and expedite the processing of insurance claims or deductions for losses on federal tax forms.
- Check your insurance to learn the maximum amount of an allowable claim for any one tree or shrub.
- For insurance, legal, and income tax purposes, keep accurate records of your landscape and real estate appraisals on any losses.
- Consult your local Plant Health Care professional at every stage in the life cycle of your landscape (planning, planting, care), and to make sure you do not suffer needless financial loss when a casualty strikes.

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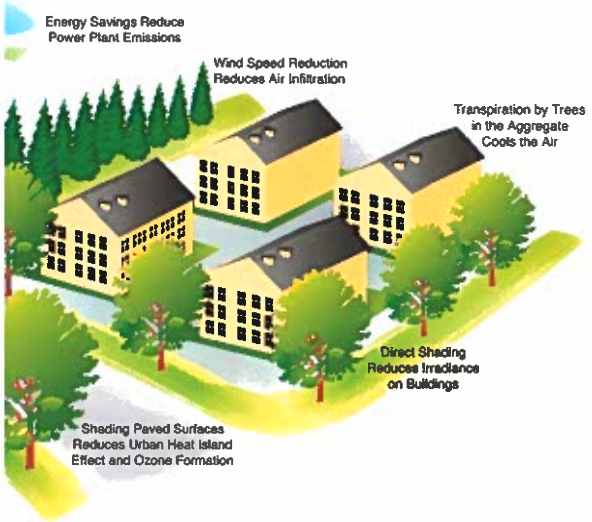
A homeowner's guide to planning for, assessing, and reducing possible financial losses on trees, specimen shrubs, and evergreens.





**What Are Your Trees Worth?**

Most everyone understands that trees and other living plants are valuable. They beautify our surroundings, purify our air, manufacture precious oxygen, act as sound barriers, and help us save energy through their cooling effect in summer and their wind reduction in winter.



Many people don't realize, however, that plants have a dollar value of their own that can be measured by competent tree appraisers. If your trees or shrubs are damaged or destroyed, you may be able to recapture your loss through an insurance claim or as a deduction from your federal income tax.

**Practical Advice**

Here is some practical advice that may help you find out what your trees and plants are worth — a process known as valuation.

**Planning for Highest Value**

A professional in the tree, nursery, or landscape industry can help you plan, develop, install, and care for all of your trees and plants so that each of them will be worth more to you.

**How Your Trees and Shrubs Are Valuated**

Seek the advice of professionals in this industry who have developed a set of guidelines for valuation. Such guidelines have been widely adopted in the field and are recognized by insurance companies, the courts, and in some cases, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

There are several valuation methods that can be used for tree appraisal. The most appropriate method will vary based on the situation and type of loss. Using an inappropriate method can result in an appraised value that does not make logical sense and will not be accepted. This is why seeking advice from an experienced appraiser is very important.



**What to Do if You Suffer Loss or Damage to Your Landscape Plants**

A casualty loss is defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as "... a loss resulting from an identifiable event of sudden, unexpected, or unusual nature." This definition applies to loss resulting from events, such as vehicular accidents, storms, floods, lightning, vandalism, or even air and soil pollution.

If you suffer damage to trees or landscaping, first consult your homeowner's insurance policy to determine the amount and type of coverage you have. Contact the insurance company to have an appraisal made by a competent tree and landscape professional who is experienced in plant appraisal. Have the appraisal made as soon as possible after your loss or damage.

The tree and landscape appraiser accomplishes many things for you. The professional can see things you might miss, help correct damage, and prescribe remedies you may be able to do yourself. The appraiser will establish the amount of your loss in financial terms, including the cost of removing debris and making repairs and replacements. All of these steps are wise investments and well worth the cost you may incur for the inspection.

**Four Potential Factors in Professional Valuation of Trees and Other Plants**

- 1) **Size.** Sometimes the size and age of a tree are such that it cannot be replaced. Trees that are too large to be replaced should be assessed by professionals who use a specialized appraisal formula.

- 2) **Species or classification.** Trees that are hardy, durable, highly adaptable, and free from objectionable characteristics are most valuable. They require less maintenance; they have sturdy, well-shaped branches, and pleasing foliage. Tree values vary according to region, the "hardiness" zone, and even local conditions. If you are not familiar with these variables, be sure your advice comes from a competent source.

