STANDARD TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE TREE WORK

Please use these terms to describe the work you would like to carry out to your protected tree. They are accepted terms that both your professional contractor and the local authority will understand.

Felling

The reduction of the tree to ground level. This might be done in a single action, or by sections if the tree is in a confined space.

Branch or limb removal

The removal of a specified branch or limb.

Deadwooding/removal of deadwood

The removal of dead limbs (see also Conservation Cutting for partial deadwooding).

Cleaning out

The removal of dead, dying and damaged limbs; crossing limbs and foreign bodies (see also Conservation Cutting).

Crown lifting

Removal of the lowest limbs to achieve clearance from the ground to a specified height. (see Figure 1).

Crown thinning

Crown thinning involves the pruning out of a proportion (usually 10-25%) of the smaller branches of the crown, without changing the overall dimensions of the tree. Usually the aim is to reduce the windage on a tree in order to improve the safety factor or to allow light through the crown. However, excessive crown thinning can stress the tree by removing a lot of energy gathering leaves while leaving most of the branches to be maintained by fewer leaves. For this reason crown reduction, which removes a balanced proportion of leaves and wood, should be preferred to thinning.

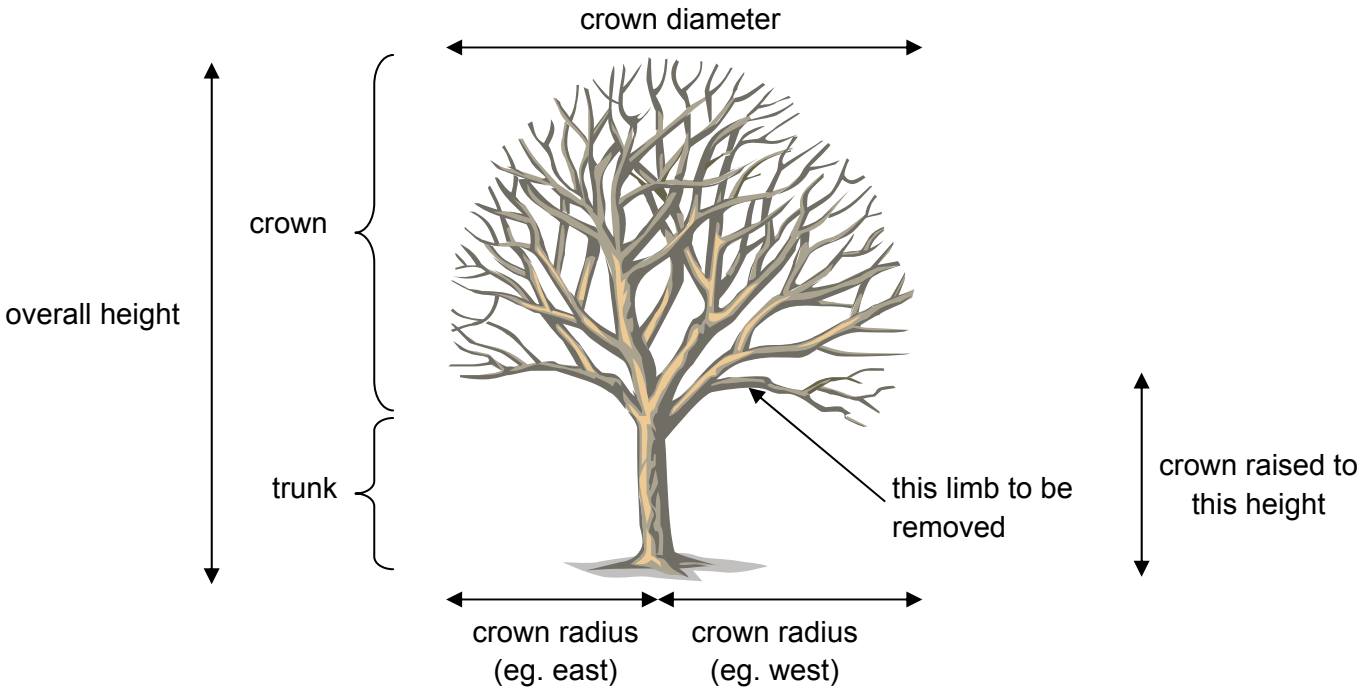

FIGURE 1.Diagram of terms describing the dimensions of a tree

Crown reduction

Crown reduction is the reduction of the overall outline of the tree, as seen against the sky, in order to improve the safety factor or allow more light to pass the tree. It is best described by specifying the height and radius of the tree that will result from the work. The height is the distance from the ground to the uppermost point. The crown radius is the horizontal distance from the centre of the trunk to the sideways extremity of the crown and is best referred to as the east, west, north or south radius. Figure 1. illustrates these terms diagrammatically. Cuts should be made at junctions with side branches which are preferably no less than one third the diameter of the part to be removed.

Conservation cutting.

Conservation cutting attempts to mimic the ways a tree breaks naturally. The jagged stubs and surfaces produced when a limb detaches naturally, provide many more habitats for wildlife than the smooth cut of a saw. Conservation cutting may be carried out on live or deadwood and indeed the retention of deadwood where it can be made safe is a central aim of conservation arborists. (See www.wildtrees.co.uk)

Pollarding

Pollarding is the complete removal of all limbs and upper crown of a tree leaving only a trunk section 2-5 metres high. Only young trees can be successfully pollarded for the first time and success may vary between species . Pollarding commonly introduces decay and once started must be repeated at intervals of 3-20 years, depending on species. If the cycle has been discontinued, the tree may become structurally insecure and it may be necessary to reduce the crown in stages (crown retrenchment) in order to return to complete pollarding. Pollarding was a traditional way of managing farm hedgerow trees and can produce valuable conservation sites.

Formative pruning

The aim of formative pruning is to encourage a structure to the tree that can be maintained into the future. Growth forms that might produce hazards in the future may be moderated at a young age so that the hazard is not expressed as a risk. For example, the removal of crossing limbs, the suppression of one co-dominant stem where the union between co-dominants is of the included bark type, or the reduction of a secondary leader or lateral limb becoming over-extended.

Epicormic shoots

Are those small shoots that grow directly out of the main trunk, generally at lower levels. These can occasionally grow large and can be poorly attached but may also be important energisers to stressed trees.

Coppicing

Coppicing is the removal of most, or all growth of the tree or shrub to near ground level, in order to produce multiple shoots from the base or ‘stool’. Coppicing is normally done on a re-occurring cycle of 2-20 years. Many broad-leafed species respond well to this treatment but very few conifers will coppice.

Bracing

The risk of a substantial part of a tree detaching from its parent may be reduced by the insertion of a wire or webbing brace between the two parts.