

Australian Standard®

**Pruning of amenity trees**



This Australian Standard® was prepared by Committee EV-018, Arboriculture. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 19 February 2007.  
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- Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
- Australian Institute of Horticulture Inc
- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Pipeline Industry Association
- Australian Property Institute
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- Institute of Australian Consulting Arboriculturists
- International Society of Arboriculture (Australia Chapter)
- Local Government Tree Resources Association
- National Arborists Association of Australia
- Nursery & Garden Industry Australia
- TAFE NSW
- The University of Melbourne
- Water Services Association of Australia

Additional interests:

- Queensland Arboricultural Association
  - Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
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Standards Australia wishes to acknowledge the participation of the expert individuals that contributed to the development of this Standard through their representation on the Committee and through public comment period.

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# Australian Standard®

## Pruning of amenity trees

Originated as AS 4373—1996.  
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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee EV-018, Arboriculture to supersede AS 4373—1996.

The objective of this revision is to reflect current arboricultural practices.

The recommendations given in this Standard are intended to apply specifically to urban and amenity trees, but exclude pruning for fruit production and silviculture.

In the preparation of this Standard, cognizance was taken of reference sources from the International Society of Arboriculture, Dr Alex Shigo, The Arboricultural Association of Western Australia, Ryde TAFE (Division of Horticulture), Burnley College—University of Melbourne and The National Arborists Associations of Australia and America.

The objective of this Standard is to provide arborists, tree workers, government departments, property owners, and contractors with a guide defining uniform tree pruning procedures and practices in order to minimize the adverse or negative impact of pruning on trees.

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## FOREWORD

The intention of this Standard is to encourage pruning practices and procedures that reduce the risk of hazard development, branch failure, pathogen infection and premature tree death.

Trees often require pruning to maintain clearance for utility services and buildings or to improve the safety, structure, and health of the tree. They are also often pruned to improve the amenity of sites in order to enable successful cohabitation between trees and people.

The procedures in this Standard are guided by theories of branch attachment and compartmentalization of decay in trees. Lopping, topping and flush cutting are unacceptable practices.

Assessment of trees and specification of their pruning should be carried out by a suitably qualified arborist. Pruning should be carried out by arborists or tree workers who are familiar with the principles, techniques and hazards of this work.

Detailed guidelines on root pruning are beyond the scope of this Standard. However, a general outline is included. Should the need arise, expert guidance should be obtained regarding root pruning and excavation around and near trees.

## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

### Australian Standard Pruning of amenity trees

#### 1 SCOPE

This Standard specifies methods for pruning of trees and gives guidance on correct and uniform practices. It is intended for use on amenity trees, including palms, and includes removal of deadwood, crown lifting, formative pruning, reduction pruning (including line clearance), selective pruning, crown thinning and remedial or restorative pruning. It does not include practices related to timber, foliage, fruit and flower production, chemical pruning nor to sculptural forms of pruning such as topiary, espalier, hedging and pleaching. The Standard does not include specific information on wildlife habitat or safety of the tree worker.

#### 2 APPLICATION

This Standard is intended for use by arborists, tree workers, government departments, building contractors and others involved with contractual arrangements for tree pruning. The Standard will also serve as a guide for property owners and others who specify pruning procedures.

#### 3 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

##### 3.1 Amenity trees

Trees with recreational, functional, environmental, ecological, social, health or aesthetic value rather than for production purposes.

##### 3.2 Arborist

The person with training to AQF Level 3 in Arboriculture, or above, or equivalent recognized and relevant experience that enables the person to perform the tasks required by this Standard.

##### 3.3 Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)

A national framework for all educational and training purposes in Australia.

##### 3.4 Bark

All tissues outside the vascular cambium.

##### 3.5 Branch

A lateral shoot on a main axis such as a trunk or another branch. A branch arising off a trunk is a first order branch. A branch arising off a first order branch is a second order branch and so on. Second and successive orders of branches may be referred to as ‘lateral branches’.

##### 3.6 Branch bark ridge

Raised or furrowed bark in the branch union that marks where the branch wood and trunk wood overlap. (See Figure 1(a).)

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