

Formative pruning III

I hope anyone who really wants to understand the importance of formative pruning was able to check out the pictures of the splitting Maple we posted on our web site. It is an excellent example of the poor structure that can develop from not performing formative pruning to a young tree.

This is something we are seeing more frequently. As the area grows and space becomes limited, landscape designs are incorporating more slender and narrow growing trees. Take parking lots as examples. At these sites every parking space is important. For this reason, trees with spreading crowns that would grow into parking spaces and vehicles are avoided. Trees with upright form however are desired as their crowns stay tight and narrow. This type of tree however tends to develop tight "V" shaped branch attachments or crotches. It is even more important for these trees to have formative pruning as they grow.

Another question that arose from people was, what about Conifers or Evergreen trees? I realized that I wrote about formative pruning without qualifying that I was mainly speaking about young deciduous trees, but the question made a great point. Yes, formative pruning can be of great value to Conifers and Evergreens. The same lesson applies to Evergreens and Conifers as in the splitting Maple tree. A double top in a Conifer or Evergreen is often a tight "V" attachment just like the Maple and can split apart especially in a wind storm.

At our house, we have two sides of the Property in Blue Spruce and Grand Fir trees as privacy screens. As these young Conifers have grown, a few of them developed double tops. Left unpruned, they would have developed into co-dominant stems years later. I would step out on a limb (pun intended) and say over fifty percent of tree failure calls we get during windy days are from a Conifer that had a double top as a young tree, and it grew into a weakly attached co-dominant stem. The force of the wind on the crown puts severe strain on the spot where the two tops connect and down one comes.

As always, for further questions consultations or quotes, give us a call today!