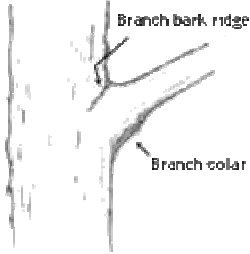


## Pruning Information from Pflugerville's Forester

It is that time of year; many people are out sprucing up their yards and getting ready for spring. I would like to share some timely pruning information. Firstly, we have entered the time of year when oaks that are susceptible to the oak wilt fungus should not be pruned. While we do not have an infestation here in Pflugerville, oak wilt centers exist in communities all around us including Round Rock, Austin, and Georgetown. What trees are susceptible to oak wilt? Spanish oak (red oak), Shumard oak and live oak are the most likely to be infected. It is best to prune these trees in late fall or winter. If you must prune to clear a low limb or clean up a broken limb, apply a pruning paint immediately over the wound. The paint will mask the 'smell' that attracts the nitidulid beetle which carries the oak wilt fungus. Thick pruning sealers are not recommended because they may trap moisture in a pruning wound.

Secondly, crape myrtles do not need to be topped to produce an abundance of flowers. Topping is the practice of cutting limbs back leaving a stub, instead of cutting back to a branch union and preserving the branch collar (see illustration). It is not a recommended practice by the International Society of Arboriculture. While crape myrtles are very tolerant to its effects, larger trees often become hazardous from such practices. Even if your crape myrtle is under a powerline, such severe pruning is not recommended. Instead, 'directional pruning' is recommended to clear the limbs away from the lines. Please visit the International Society of Arboriculture's consumer education website for more information: [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com) or email me, and I will address your home owner's association, civic group, or school [april@cityofpflugerville.com](mailto:april@cityofpflugerville.com).



*Pruning cuts should be made at a branch union and preserve the branch collar.*