

Live Oak Trees, Pruning

A very popular tree in Georgia.

Because of its strength and long life, the live oak is one of Georgia's most widely used evergreen trees. But, you should know that its life and quality are greatly influenced by pruning.

The natural form of a typical live oak is low, broad-spreading, and mounding. For many situations, the tree takes this form only because it was pruned when it was young.

Start when the tree is young.

When the tree's environment requires that it be pruned, pruning should begin when the tree is young and continue throughout the tree's life. If you want a taller, more arching tree, choose a young tree with the highest branches possible. Otherwise, remove the lower branches. Also, you will want to remove limbs that have narrow angles because they will normally develop into weak crotches later.

A large live oak tree can be the source of a lot of pleasure and can be worth a great deal of money.



Once it is mature...

As a live oak matures, it's important that you follow through with good pruning. The canopy must be thinned every three to five years to keep it open so wind can move more freely through the branches. Resistance to winds is the reason many live oak limbs break.

Prune the growth on the ends...

Pruning lower branches near the trunk is important. Perhaps, the greatest pruning need is to thin the large, heavy tufts of growth that form on the ends of the branches. If these are left unpruned, the limbs often break during storms because of the great weight that causes them to sway back and forth.

Opening the canopy of the live oak tree also allows for the grass and other plants under the tree to grow better.

For more information on pruning live oak trees; contact your local County Extension Office.