



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
US ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON-FORT LEE  
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FORT LEE, VIRGINIA 23801-1720

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for assistance.

FORT LEE POLICY NO. 16-03

1 June 2009

IMNE-LEE-PWO

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Trimming and Planting of Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers Around Buildings

1. **Background:** Since 1993 increased emphasis on the appearance and quality of groundkeeping around buildings, and decreased Directorate of Logistics/Directorate of Public Works (DOL/DPW) manpower resources to accomplish the total ground keeping mission, have made it necessary for building occupants to assume responsibility for the appearance of the trees/shrubs around their buildings.

2. **Policy:**

a. The building occupant will be responsible for the minor maintenance of shrubs/ornamental trees within 75 feet of their building and parking areas. If there are any questions as to the extent of the bldg occupant's responsibility, contact the DOL/DPW's Operations Division, at (804) 734-5230. Trimming and pruning will be accomplished in accordance with the guidance at enclosure 1. Minor maintenance will include mulching and weeding shrubs/trees as appropriate. Major maintenance of shrubs and trees will be accomplished by DOL/DPW. Major maintenance is defined as removal of limbs in excess of 2 inches in diameter or trimming limbs that are higher than 6 feet from the ground that are creating a safety hazard for occupants or structures. The building occupant will identify major maintenance of shrubs/trees to the DOL/DPW by placing a service order at (804) 734-5100.

b. Mulch beds will be the minimum necessary for acceptable appearance and shall not exceed 3 inches in depth. Care must be exercised to avoid blocking drains or diverting stormwater. Mulch placed directly against building walls encourages pest entry and will not be allowed.

c. Flowers, shrubs and small annual/perennial plants may be planted and grown by building occupants provided occupant establishes and maintains such plantings.

(1) Flower/shrub beds should have humus or peat moss mixed in with the existing topsoil to enhance drainage and root developments.

(2) Recommended for planting:

(a) Flowers (seeds or plants). Marigold, petunia, coleus, zinnia, aster, and snapdragon and others are recommended for the Fort Lee climate zone.

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(b) Plants. Geranium (south or full sun), begonia for shady (northern) exposure, pansy, creeping phlox, candytuft, primrose, chrysanthemum are acceptable.

(c) Bulbs. Crocus, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip, gladiolus, and others are recommended for the Fort Lee area.

(3) Prohibited Plants. Certain self-propagating, poisonous or noxious plants, such as honeysuckle, privet hedge, mare's tail, pokeberry, castor bean, sweet gum, and trumpet vine will not be planted or cultivated by building occupants. Ivy may be planted as ground cover or trained on trellis and controlled by occupants from growing on buildings. Ivy growing on walls is damaging to the walls, and its cultivation is prohibited.

(4) Irrigation. Flowerbeds should not be over-watered. Where rainfall is normal, little additional watering is required. When plants need water, they will show it by signs of wilting. Over-watering of plants restricts the air supply of the roots. Good drainage in root zones is very important. Watering by hand held hose or sprinkling can is recommended.

(5) Fertilization. Quantities of fertilizer must be kept low and in proper ratio to quantity of soil in the flowerbed, i.e., one pound of 5-10-5 per bushel of soil well mixed in flowerbed per year. When woods' topsoil is first used, one-half gallon of agricultural lime per bushel of soil well mixed is beneficial for the first year and not needed thereafter for five years or longer. Lime in the root zone of trees and shrubs are usually detrimental to them.

3. **Effective Date**: This policy is effective on the above-mentioned date of this memorandum.
4. **Supersession**: This policy supersedes Fort Lee Policy No. 16-03 dated 10 June 2003.
5. **Proponent**: Proponent for this policy is DOL/DPW's Operations Division, (804) 734-5230.

Encl



MICHAEL G. MORROW  
COL, LG  
Garrison Commander

DISTRIBUTION:  
LEEKEY

## TRIMMING AND PRUNING GUIDE

### 1. PRUNING SHRUBS AND ORNAMENTAL TREES.

a. The pruning of shrubs and trees requires a limited number of tools. These tools are available at the U-Do-It Center. Hand shears are useful for removing or heading-back small branches up to one-half inch diameter. Lopping shears with handles about two feet long are used for stems up to one inch in diameter. Hedge shears are needed if shrubs are to be pruned to a smooth form.

b. A crescent-shape pruning saw is ideal for cutting branches larger than one inch in diameter, and for removing the large stems of multiple-stem shrubs.

c. Regular pruning should be practiced to maintain the natural shape of the shrub, or to develop a desired special form such as clipped hedge or topiary specimen. The pruning must also promote the production of flowers and fruit when these are important features of the plant.

### 2. SHRUB PRUNING TECHNIQUES.

a. During the first year or two after planting, only light pruning is needed to remove damaged branches, and head back any that become excessively long. As the shrub matures, it must be thinned out to allow light penetration, and headed back to maintain acceptable size and informal shape. In all cases dead, broken, diseased, or insect-damaged branches should be removed.

b. Pruning cuts to thin out the shrub should be made close to the main stem from which the side branch is being removed. A close cut will heal rapidly. Stubs should not be left because they are unsightly, and serve as a place for rot to develop. When old stems are removed from multiple-stem shrubs, they should be cut as close to the crown of the plant as possible.

c. When branches are headed back, the cut should be made just above a bud or side shoot. This will allow the plant to continue growth from the location of the cut, and not leave a bare, unsightly exposed stem.

3. WHEN TO PRUNE. Light corrective pruning to maintain an attractive shape may be done at any season of the year. The major pruning operation, which is designed to thin out the shrub, or renew the flowering wood, should be done at an appropriate time for the type of plant and the season of blooming, as prescribed below.

### 4. DECIDUOUS OR EVERGREEN SHRUBS FOR FOLIAGE.

a. Shrubs grown primarily for their foliage should be pruned in late winter or very early spring before growth starts. This will reduce the possibility of winter injury. Pruning is a

devitalizing process, and if a severe drop in temperature occurs soon after it is done, the plant may be damaged or killed.

b. Narrow leaf evergreens and plants like privet, which make rapid growth early in season, may receive a second pruning in early summer to maintain a desirable shape during the growing season.

## 5. SPRING FLOWERING SHRUBS.

a. Shrubs, which bloom in the spring or early summer before the end of June, should be pruned as soon as the blooming season is over. Such shrubs form flower buds on shoots during late summer of the previous year. The pruning should be done after they bloom to secure maximum beauty, and allow vigorous growth during the summer to provide flower buds for the next year.

b. The spring flowering shrubs listed below should be pruned immediately after the blooming season.

Cercis spp – Redbud species  
Chaenomeles japonica – Japanese quince  
Forsythia spp – All forsythia species  
Lonicera spp – Honeysuckle species  
Magnolia spp – Magnolia species  
Philadelphus spp – Mock-orange species  
Pieris spp – Andromeda species  
Rhododendron spp – Azaleas and rhododendrons  
Rosa spp – Rambling rose species  
Spiraea spp – Early white spirea species  
Viburnum spp – Viburnum species  
Weigela florida – Old fashioned weigela

## 6. SUMMER AND AUTUMN FLOWERING SHRUBS.

a. Shrubs that bloom after June usually do so from buds that are formed on shoots, which grow during the spring and early summer of the same season. Such shrubs should be pruned in later winter to promote early season shoot growth. Buds will form on the new stems and produce attractive flowers during the summer or fall.

b. The summer flowering shrubs listed below should be pruned in late winter or early spring before growth starts.

Abelia spp – Abelia species  
Hydrangea spp – Hydrangea species  
Hypericum spp – St. John's Wort  
Lagerstroemia indica – Crepe myrtle  
Rosa spp – Bush roses  
Spiraea spp – Spirea species

## 7. PRUNING SPECIFIC SHRUBS.

a. The first operation in pruning is to remove dead, broken, diseased, or insect-damaged branches. The plant should then be thinned out, headed back, or sheared depending on the type of shrub and its location and use in the landscape.

b. Shrubs, which develop numerous stems, are pruned by a continuous renewal process. During the first, few years after planting only light heading back and thinning out is needed. After the shrub reaches mature size, several of the oldest stems should be removed each year, and vigorous young shoots should be retained to provide stems for renewal. Remove weak, prostrate, and broken, or damaged stems. The remaining branches should be headed back and thinned out as needed to develop the desired form and size. The thinning out should be sufficient to allow light to reach the young shoots, which develop from the crown of the plant.

c. Multiple-stem shrubs that have been neglected and have become quite dense may be cut down to short stubs for renewal. This results in a rather unattractive appearance for a year or more, but may be a satisfactory procedure if the shrub is of a desirable species and is in an appropriate location. Contact DOL/DPW Environmental Management Office for guidance before attempting such major pruning.

d. Shrubs that have a dense bushy type of growth with only one, or a limited number of, main stems are pruned by thinning out and heading back the side branches. Remove a few branches each year to thin out the top of the plant and allow light to penetrate. Cut back long branches to maintain an informal natural shape and size which is suitable for the location.

## 8. BOX SHRUBS.

a. Box shrubs should be pruned by thinning out the top half of the plant, and cutting back the branches to retain the desired height. The thinning operation will allow light to penetrate into the bush and promote leaf growth. This results in a natural, informal-type growth with good green color extending to the center of the shrub.

b. In certain locations, and in hedges, you may prefer to shear your box into a smooth, rounded form. This is appropriate in a formal landscape setting but will result in a rather thin layer of leaves on the outside of the plant.

9. HORIZONTAL-TYPE JUNIPER. The low- and horizontal-type junipers should be pruned primarily from the top. Branches which extend upward should be cut back. Allow the lateral branches to develop into points around the plant to give a graceful spreading form. Very little lateral pruning should be done unless the long branches cause the shrub to become too large for its location.

10. NARROWLEAF EVERGREENS. Narrow leaf evergreen shrubs such as arborvitae, chamecyparis, erect junipers, and yew typically develop numerous branches. They can withstand relatively heavy pruning. Thin out the shrub by removing some of the older branches and head back as needed to retain the desired size and form.

#### 11. BROADLEAF EVERGREENS.

a. Broadleaf evergreens, which are grown for foliage, such as certain species of euonymus and holly, should be pruned in late winter by thinning out and heading back to secure the desired form and size. A limited number of stems may be cut at any season for use in arrangements in the home.

b. Azaleas and camellias may grow quite rapidly under favorable climatic and soil conditions. Remove flower clusters at the end of the blooming season and head back terminal and lateral branches to maintain a somewhat open informal shape.

c. Laurel and rhododendron grow quite slowly and need very little pruning. The flower clusters should be removed at the end of the blooming season. Long stems which extend beyond the desired size and shape of the plant may be cut back to a strong, lateral branch.

d. Cutting all stems back to six or eight inches from the ground may rejuvenate old broadleaf evergreen shrubs, which have become too large for their location. New shoots will develop from the base.

#### 12. HEDGES.

a. Hedge plants may be allowed to develop as an informal row of shrubs planted close together. The branches of such plants should be thinned out as needed to promote new growth from inside the shrub. Long branches should be headed back to maintain the desired height.

b. A clipped hedge must receive regular shearing to develop a smooth geometric form. During the first year or two, the top should be cut back and thinned out to encourage the growth of low branches. When the plants become well established, and have developed a rather dense top, the shearing should begin to secure the flat or oval form that may be desired. The top should always be narrower than the base to allow good light exposure for the lower branches. If the top is wider than the base, the lower branches will make poor growth or die.

### 13. ROSES.

a. Bush roses should be pruned each spring just before growth starts. Cut dead and damaged canes back to living tissue, just above a strong bud. The total height of the bush should be reduced by cutting the canes back to one-half or two-thirds their original length. This will result in the production of a good crop of medium to large flowers. If long stemmed, exhibition type roses are desired, the canes may be cut back to one-quarter to one-third their original length.

b. Tree roses require heavy pruning during the spring, and some thinning out and heading back during the growing season to prevent the top from becoming too large for the trunk. After dead and damaged wood is removed, the remaining canes should be cut back to about 10 inches long.

c. Climbing roses of the rambler type are pruned lightly in the spring to remove dead and weak canes. After the June blooming season is over, shorten the long canes to encourage new growth of laterals on which next year's flowers will be born.

d. Climbing roses of the large-flowered, ever-blooming type are pruned in early spring before growth starts. Remove dead and damaged wood and cut live canes back moderately to retain the desired size for the fence or trellis upon which it is growing.

### 14. PRUNING TECHNIQUES.

a. Pruning cuts should be made close to the trunk or limb from which the branch is being removed. Stubs should not be left because they are unsightly and will eventually rot back into the tree.

b. When small branches are removed to thin out the tree, the cuts should be made just above a side branch. When twigs are headed back, the cut should be made just above a strong bud. This procedure allows continued growth of the branch and avoids any objectionable bare stem ends.

c. The pruning operation should involve an orderly removal of undesirable branches. Dead or damaged limbs should be cut out. Branches with narrow-angled crotches should be eliminated, especially those which originate from the main trunk. Such branches usually are weak and may break during a windstorm or under weight of sleet or snow.

d. In using a saw to remove branches that are longer than one inch in diameter, care must be exercised to avoid the stripping of bark below the branch. If only one cut is made from the top, the back and a thin layer of wood will hold at the base when the branch falls, and strip off a long section of bark below the wound. This problem is easily avoided by using three cuts. First, cut up into the branch about one-third its diameter, several inches up from the base. Then cut down from the top about one inch out from the first cut. The branch will break off cleanly with no possibility of bark splitting. Finally, remove the stub with one cut close to the trunk.

e. Branches larger than two inches in diameter, which require the use of large coarse toothed saws, or power chain saws, should be removed by the DOL/DPW.

#### 15. WOUND TREATMENT.

a. Pruning wounds less than two inches in diameter on healthy trees will soon be covered by callus tissue and need no special protective treatment.

b. Apply a new layer of asphalt dressing, as needed, every two or three years to maintain a complete protective layer. Do not use dressings that contain creosote. This will damage the flesh and delay development of the protective layer of callus.

#### 16. SEASON OF PRUNING.

a. Although minor corrective pruning may be done at any season, the best time to prune ornamental trees is during late winter or early spring before new growth starts. The branch formation is easy to observe when the leaves are not present, and appropriate cuts can be made. The development of new shoots and foliage quickly hide the wounds, and give the tree an attractive appearance.

b. Heavy pruning should not be done during the late fall or early winter. Pruning is a devitalizing process and winter injury may occur if it is done just before severe cold weather.

c. The sap may flow rather freely from the wounds of Birch, Dogwood, Elm, Maple, and Walnut trees that are pruned during the late dormant season. This bleeding is not harmful to the tree and usually stops shortly after the leaves develop.

#### 17. PRUNING EVERGREEN TREES.

a. Evergreen trees require very little training or pruning in home landscape plantings. Most species have a relatively flat branching habit with strong, wide-angled crotches. They are commonly allowed to retain all branches with no removal of lower limbs as is commonly done with deciduous trees.

b. The pruning operation for evergreen trees consists primarily of removing any dead, diseased, or damaged branches. The tips of long branches may be cut back, but trees should be allowed to grow in their natural form.

c. Some evergreens such as Hemlock, Arborvitae, Chamaecyparis, and Juniper may be pruned or sheared quite heavily to maintain a low compact form. Cedar, Fir, Pine, and Spruce do not respond as favorably to such intensive pruning and should be allowed to grow in their natural form.



d. Remove the dead flowers of Rhododendron and Magnolia at the end of the blooming season. This will stimulate new growth, and the development of a thicker crown. Long branches may be cut back to a strong bud or lateral to improve the shape of the tree.

#### 18. PRUNING DECIDUOUS TREES.

a. Deciduous ornamental trees must be carefully trained when young. You must develop a strong framework that will ensure long life and the ability to withstand adverse climatic conditions.

b. Most landscape trees should be trained with one central leader that extends above all other branches. Select strong main branches which are spaced at least 8 to 12 inches apart vertically, and which are evenly distributed around the trunk.

c. Remove branches with weak, narrow-angled crotches. Dead and damaged limbs should be removed or cut back to healthy wood. Thin out shoots and side branches, which cross each other, or grow close together.

d. After strong main branches have been established, very little pruning is required to remove damaged branches, as well as those that cross or grow close together.

e. Trees that typically grow in open or vase form, such as Elm, Locust, Redbud, and Willow should be allowed to develop in their usual form without attempting to retain a central trunk. Some trees are very attractive when grown in clump with multiple trunks. Birch and Crepe Myrtle are examples of trees that may be trained in this way.