

## **Gardner Tree Trimming Program**

The City of Gardner is committed to providing safe and reliable electric service. Obviously, trees and good electric service are both important to our community. Unfortunately, the two aren't always compatible and the City must trim trees for safety purposes, as required by law, and to avoid service interruptions.

Our employees and contractors trim tree limbs away from overhead power lines to achieve two critical objectives:

- Public safety
- Reliability of electric service

Many service outages and interruptions are caused by tree limbs that fall into power lines causing damage to wires, short circuits, and other problems. That creates potential danger for you and your property, danger that can be avoided by not planting tall-growing trees under or near electric wires, and by routine tree-trimming.

The City hires a contractor to provide service for the Electric Line Tree Trimming Program.

Gardner adheres to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300, Standard Practices for Trees, Shrubs and Other Woody Plant Maintenance. This standard, endorsed by the International Society of Arboriculture, the National Arbor Day Foundation and the National Arborist Association, requires tree-trimmers to cut branches back to the parent limb. This practice allows the pruning cuts to heal more rapidly, thereby reducing the chances of insect and disease damage, and promotes a healthier re-growth of branches that are directed away from the power lines.

Gardner also uses the natural trimming method (endorsed by the Tree Care Industry Association). It is called natural trimming because branches are pruned back to a natural point of growth in the crown of the tree. Natural trimming is healthier than tree topping, which is the indiscriminate cutting back of tree branches to reduce the size of the tree crown. Although topping generally leaves the tree with a more uniform or balanced appearance, the International Society of Arboriculture calls topping "perhaps the most harmful pruning practice known." According to the society, topping stresses trees, makes them more vulnerable to insect and disease infections, and causes decay.

Pruning considerations include: species of tree, growth and re-growth rates, location of trees in proximity to power lines, voltage of power lines, type of power-line construction, length of pruning cycle, natural tree shape and branching pattern, general tree condition, appearance after pruning and tree-owner input.

Again, careful planting of trees and shrubs away from power lines can help eliminate the need for trimming in the future.