

Chopping down that tree isn't the only answer when it blocks your view

The Puget Sound area is unbelievably rich in water and mountain views. Unfortunately, sometimes the views and trees do not mix well.

A tree or groups of trees that may infringe upon someone's view may be highly valued by someone else. A bit of tolerance and calm discussions to arrive at win-win solutions are preferable to starting a war with a neighbor.

Solutions do exist for certain types of situations. Some of the following information is from a Plant Amnesty publication titled "Saving Views and Trees."

THINNING

Some conifer trees can be thinned evenly throughout their canopies to enhance a view and use the

es around a portion of the trunk to open a view. Branches near the top and bottom may remain. While strange-looking, the method preserves the tree and the view.

SKIRTING

In some instances, lower limbs can be removed to enhance a view. Ideally, do not limb up more than one-third of the tree's height. Trees can survive if more is removed, but their health and safety may suffer.

AVOID TOPPING

If a top is removed, conifer trees will always attempt to form new tops. In time, new shoots may form or upper branches will turn up. Soon a dense

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tree as a focal point. Removing less than one-quarter of the foliage will retain a tree's natural form and structure.

WINDOWING

This method works well when a large tree close to a residence is blocking a view. Windowing requires some skill. By carefully removing certain branches, windows can be created that will frame a view. To balance the tree's appearance, branches on the opposite side can be removed above and/or below the framed view.

In some cases, homeowners can remove branch-

mass of foliage or several upturned branches will once again block the view.

Topped trees can become hazardous over time. The cutting wounds can develop decay. The new tops are more weakly attached and are more vulnerable to severe storms than trees that have their original trunks intact.

The consequences of tree topping often take years to develop as the new tops become larger, heavier and more exposed to the elements. Because some may fail during severe weather, they can cause damage to nearby targets.

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