



FBMG Help Desk  
**Question of the Week**

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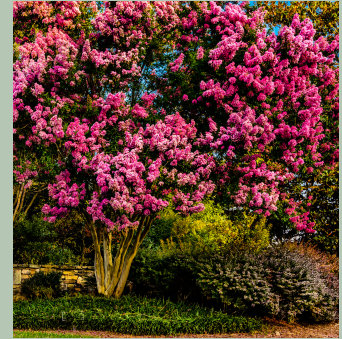
*Does my Crape Myrtle need trimming?*

*Answer: Not necessarily..*

# The Crape Myrtle A Wonderful Performer

## Lilac of the South

*the bark of a mature crape myrtle tree  
can be quite stunning*



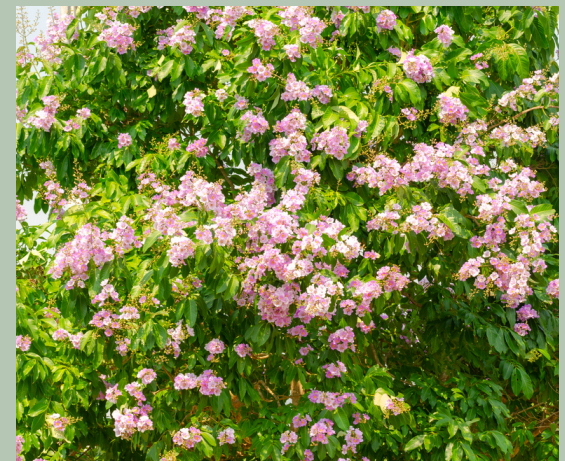
*Crape Myrtles are  
relatively low maintenance,  
prolific bloomers, with a  
blooming season lasting up  
to 120 days.*

### **Have a Reason to Prune Remove Branches that are:**

- *dead or damaged*
- *rubbing together*
- *low lying and may pose a hazard*
- *rubbing together*
- *rubbing against buildings*

### **Remove**

- *suckers from around the bottom*



The Lagerstromia Basham Party Pink,  
is a Texas Superstar

# If Pruning is Necessary

## *Proper Tools and Guidance are a Must*

**You will need clean, sharp tools to be able to make clean cuts.  
It is advisable to keep your feet on the ground while pruning.**

### Proper Pruning can Help the Tree By:

- removing dead or injured branches as well as branches that may cause injury to the tree, property, or people

### Improper Pruning can Injure the Tree By:

- Reducing it's ability to produce food
- Sun scald can occur to the interior branches that were protected from the lost branches.
- New branches though plentiful are often very weak and don't fare well in storms.

Follow a Guide on Where and How to make the cuts:

- The Texas A&M Forest Service has amazing articles such as Pruning Mature Trees, Pruning Young Trees, Crape Myrtle Bark Scale under their Learn and Explore e library section on their website <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu>  
<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/elibrary>

### When in doubt call in an arborist:

- You can search for one at [www.treesaregood.org](http://www.treesaregood.org)

# Know Why You are Pruning

## Prune For a Reason

*Of all the gardening tasks pruning is one of the most baffling. As a result, many plants are pruned beyond recognition and damaged annually by well-meaning gardeners.*



Believing it is necessary, the practice of lopping the tops off of crape myrtle trees or 'topping' AKA 'Crape Murder' become an all too common annual ritual by some gardeners.

### Pruning causes Wounds

- Wounds especially new wounds provide opportunity for infection and insect entry.
- Improper pruning can cause poor growth, permanent scarring, a weakened plant, a shortened the lifespan, and poor performance
- Prune for a Reason



*Don't be a copycat*

*Just Say No To Needless Pruning*

# Topping Can Lead to Tree Decline

## Inviting Disease and Insects

*Possible long term injuries to the tree can occur thus shortening it's lifespan.*



### **Included but not limited to are:**

- Reducing the ability of the tree to produce food
- Sun scald can occur to the interior branches once protected from those lost.
- New branches though plentiful are often very weak and can't fare well in storms.
- More susceptible to insect attack and disease
- Insect Crape Myrtle Bark Scale is attracted to open wounds

# Inviting to a Variety of Wildlife

## Year-round visual interest!

*A source of food and shelter.*

*Pollinators can be found on the blooms throughout the blooming season. Birds can be found eating the berries and their nests are often found in the branches of crape myrtles.*



*The Crape Myrtle provides a source of interest in the landscape throughout the year.*



*Do you have questions  
about your home  
landscape and plants?*

*Contact the Fort Bend  
Master Gardener Help Desk*

*Email:  
FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu*

*Phone:  
281-341-7068*

*The Help Desk is manned  
Monday thru Friday,  
9am-Noon*

*Pruning with a Purpose.pub (tamu.edu)  
Prune with a Purpose - Garden.org*

*Crape Myrtle Pruning | Home & Garden Information Center  
(clemson.edu)*

*Principles & Practices for Pruning Trees | Home & Garden  
Information Center (clemson.edu)*

*Tree Topping.pdf (illinois.gov)*

*Question: Is Tree "Topping" A Good Method, And What  
Happens To The Tree After It Is Topped? | Purdue Extension  
Forestry & Natural Resources*

*New Texas Superstar introduced: Basham's Party Pink crape  
myrtle - AgriLife Today (tamu.edu)*

*Avoid Aggressively Pruning Crape Myrtles | A Fruitful  
Discussion (uga.edu)*

*Texas State Shrub | Crape Myrtle (statesymbolsusa.org)*

*Stop the Crape Murder by Greg Grant: Dept. of  
Agriculture*

*Pruning Crape Myrtle - Gardening Solutions - University  
of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences  
(ufl.edu)*

*www.si.edu/stories/crape-myrtle-trees-arent-native-us-  
bird*

*Pruning Landscape Trees (psu.edu) Pruning Landscape  
Trees*

*Crape Myrtle Pruning | Home & Garden Information  
Center (clemson.edu)  
Karen Russ, ©HGIC, Clemson Extension*

*"Crape Murder" is a term credited to a 1997 article in  
Southern Living magazine*

*https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/elibrary  
http://tfsweb.tamu.edu  
www.treesaregood.org*

*ree Topping.pdf (illinois.gov)*

*Crape Myrtle Bark Scale | Home & Garden Information  
Center (clemson.edu)*

*Follow Proper Pruning Techniques - Earth-Kind®  
Landscaping Earth-Kind® Landscaping (tamu.edu)*

