

Stop the Crape Murder!

By: Melinda Sperl

It is January and already I have seen Crepe Murder! Seeing this again begs me to repeat this article hoping to stop one more Crepe Myrtle from being ruined.

Crepe Murder is when Crape Myrtles are trimmed to long stubs with gnarly looking ends. This looks so foreign on these beautiful plants that it hurts to look at them. Why does this happen? It certainly isn't the correct way to cut the Crape to make it more attractive. It certainly isn't healthier for the plant to be cut back so brutally each year. The only benefit I can see is that it will make a line of trees grow uniformly tall each year. But, if there is only one tree, why trim it back so harshly?

How should these colorful plants be trimmed? Crape Myrtles are actually a large shrub grown as a tree. Each year it should get a little trimming which includes trimming off the dead flower tips, cutting any inside or cross growing branches plus trimming any unsightly branches to lightly shape it. Severely cutting a branch each year in the exact same place creates knob-like formations on the branches that are unnatural and unhealthy and will shorten the life of this beautiful plant. If unsure how to correctly trim your trees call your local county extension office or a qualified expert in the field like a Horticulturalist or Arborist.

So, please, stop the Crape Murder.

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