Using Standards and Best Management Practices

*T*he use of ANSI A300 standards and the series of accompanying best management practice publications is a sign of professionalism and a sure way to elevate tree practices in any community.

Imagine trying to buy a ceiling or lamp lightbulb if every socket were a different size and thread configuration. Or trying to order a new pair of work boots if each store had a different way of describing how they fit. Standards have been created to help people communicate effectively and to facilitate compatible operations and relationships.

In the tree care industry, attempts at standardization began decades ago. However, according to Bob Rouse of the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), different organizations had different ideas about what the standards should be, and they set them accordingly. "They were all created by well-meaning people, but in 1991 we were able to get everyone together at the table and unify," Bob says. This was done under the auspices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the administrator and coordinator of a voluntary private sector system

that has essentially brought order to chaos. Representatives of nearly 1,000 companies and agencies form committees that meet and come to a consensus about definitions and science-based procedures within their professional areas of interest.

Of interest to arborists and urban foresters are the standards assigned the designation A300 under the title *Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management — Standard Practices.* These are broken down into 10 parts, each developed by a wide range of representatives and coordinated by a permanent committee known as the Accredited Standards Committee A300 (ASC A300). Bob Rouse is the committee secretary, and TCIA is the organization accredited by ANSI to do this important work. The committee meets twice a year to review and revise standards as necessary and always invites input from others in the green industry.

The combination of ANSI A300 standards and accompanying best management practices are intended to raise the level of professionalism and public confidence in the field of tree care.
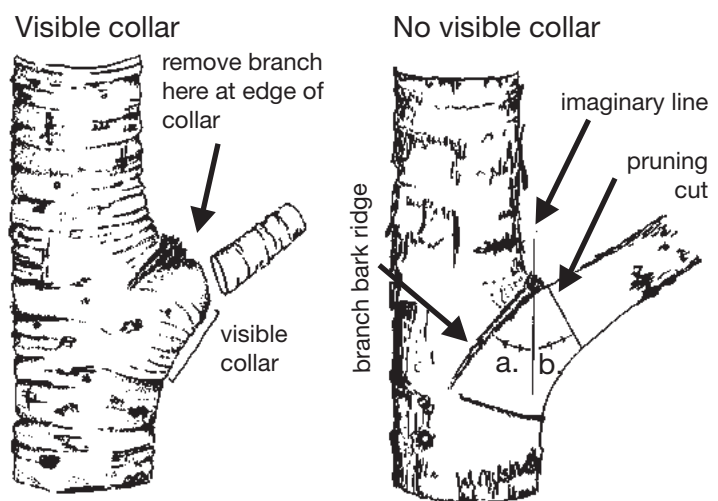
ANSI A300 standards are listed. For each, the International Society of Arboriculture has produced a best management practices publication that provides how-to information that serves as guidance in implementing the standard in the field. These sets of documents should be part of the library of every tree board, arborist, urban forester, grounds manager, and — in short — anyone who works with trees.

ANSI A300 (Part 1) *Pruning*

The purpose of this standard is to develop specifications for tree pruning, including but not limited to reducing risk, maintaining or improving tree health and structure, improving aesthetics, or satisfying a specific need.

Example: *A pruning cut that removes a branch at its point of origin shall be made close to the trunk or parent limb, without cutting into the branch bark ridge or collar, or leaving a stub.*

BMP: There are two accompanying booklets on pruning. *Tree Pruning* is directed at anyone who prunes trees. It illustrates pruning types and proper pruning techniques, discusses when to prune, and contains a list of trees that often drip sap after early season pruning. Also included are a sample request for bids and a sample work order. The other publication, *Utility Pruning of Trees*, is intended for professionals in that industry.

Visible collar

remove branch here at edge of collar

visible collar

No visible collar

imaginary line

pruning cut

branch bark ridge

a. b

ISA's BMP booklet provides well-illustrated guidance for a wide range of pruning situations and practices.

OTHER INFO IN THIS ISSUE
- ☑ What standards represent
- ☑ How they can be used

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