

SPARTANBURG HERALD-JOURNAL
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2012

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Crape myrtle murder

As soon as the leaves fall, some property owners begin mutilating their crape myrtle trees. Southern Living Magazine calls it “crape murder.”

These hardy small-growing trees require little maintenance. Yes, suckers at the base and on the trunk should be removed (breaking them flush at the trunk is really better than cutting them off), and removal of dead and badly crossing limbs and possibly a little shaping might be done. Additional pruning is “busy work” — and may be damaging work.

Topping or cutting large limbs results in permanent ugliness and growth of multiple suckers in the spring (a “pom-

pom” effect that is very unnatural and unattractive). Possible enhanced summer blooming is not worth the year-round ugliness.

The Men’s Garden Club’s six-page color brochure on crape myrtle maintenance and selection is available at this website: www.dirtdaubers.org/Shared/PDF/GardeningHelp/CrapeMyrtle.pdf. There are crape myrtle varieties available that mature at from 3-4 feet to 25-30 feet tall. Plan ahead!

Regardless of what your neighbor or the business down the street does, don’t pay someone to devalue your property.

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