

**Report #2012-2
October 16, 2012**

Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Trees – Report to the City Council

Subject: Tree Trimming at Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)

In consideration of the fact that both BARC and some of its neighbors such as Patuxent Wildlife Center and the city of Greenbelt are all members of the Baltimore Washington Partnership for Forest Stewardship (BWPFs), a multi-jurisdictional group of federal, state and local agencies and municipalities that promotes the preservation and health of the remaining forested areas in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, the Greenbelt City Council Advisory Committee on Trees (ACT) respectfully requests that BARC review its current tree trimming practices and make efforts to use professional arborists or to train crews that are currently performing the work in proper tree care and pruning techniques.

It has been observed that over the past year or more numerous trees have been improperly pruned or trimmed along road and power line right of ways on USDA ARS property in Beltsville, MD, especially on the East side of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center Property (BARC-E). Improper pruning includes the stub cutting of branches and the topping of trees. These practices cause tree decline due to disease introduction, and often result in branch proliferation that actually increases the chance of limb breakage and tree failure. Photographs from BARC-E exhibiting the improper techniques are shown below.

Additionally, instead of removal of the cut branches, the trimmings are left lying in place under the cut areas or pushed into the forest. This practice creates problems for roadside and power line maintenance, blocks roadway sight lines, adds to wildfire potential, and can result in increased breeding sites for pests. Most certified arborists remove and/or chip tree trimmings.

Continuation of current practices offers a poor example of tree care and maintenance, and is contrary to the efforts of the BWPFs.

RECOMMENDATION: ACT unanimously recommends that pruning on BARC-E property be modified to be in compliance with certified arborists' recommended trimming procedures.



View of pruned areas of BARC-E.

