

# Tree Suckers



Suckers are clones that grow from the roots of a host tree. They sprout up around the base of the tree or further out around the root zone. Trees put out suckers in times of stress in an effort to produce more branches and increase growth. It's still best to remove the suckers, though. Suckers are not only unsightly, but they can also divert water and nutrients away from the main tree, making it harder for the tree to recover.



Picture from CSU Extension Office

## Prevention

Like most garden pests, it can be easier to prevent suckers than to remove them. The best way to prevent suckers is just to follow good tree maintenance practices. Trees produce suckers when they are under stress, so make sure your trees have the right amount of water and food and check frequently for any bugs or disease that might put additional strain on the tree. It's also important to make sure your trees are pruned correctly.

## Control

Suckers need to be controlled differently than ordinary weeds. Unlike regular weeds, suckers are part of the host tree which can be harmed by ordinary weed killers. The best way to remove suckers is to cut them at the soil level with sharp pruners. Most suckers will return after you prune them. To prevent this, use **Sucker Stopper**. **Sucker-Stopper** is made from the plant growth regulator naphthaleneacetate (NAA) and is widely used in commercial agriculture to prevent suckers. One application of **Sucker-Stopper** after pruning will prevent suckers from reappearing for 3 months. Thoroughly cover the primary wound or where the existing sprouts have been removed.



## Tree Seedlings

Some trees, like **female ash, Siberian elm, honeylocust, hawthorn, crabapple, maple and goldenrain tree**, don't produce suckers, but they do re-seed themselves. These little seedlings that pop up aren't connected to the main tree, so they can be controlled just like weeds. Keep your grass well watered, aerated and fertilized to prevent tree seedlings and other weeds from establishing themselves in the lawn.