

# Tree Protection & Preservation

The purpose of the City's Tree Protection and Preservation Program is to protect, promote, and maintain a healthy, diverse, and mature canopy of native and naturalized hardwood and evergreen tree species. Trees provide the following benefits:

- Provide shade
- Reduce heat & glare
- Enhance property value
- Enhance aesthetics
- Abate noise pollution
- Reduce flooding
- Control erosion
- Control sedimentation
- Buffer incompatible land uses
- Control stormwater runoff

## Frequently Asked Questions

***What is a protected tree?*** Any tree having a DBH of 4 inches or greater that is not specifically excluded from protection, including all mangroves, Sabal Palms, or Cabbage Palms.

***What is DBH?*** "Diameter at Breast Height" is the diameter, in inches, of a tree measured at 4.5 feet above the existing grade.

***Do I need a permit to remove a protected tree?*** Yes. It shall be unlawful for any person, without first obtaining a permit, to cut down, damage, top, poison, replace, replant, or effectively remove through excessive injury, or in any manner destroy or cause to be destroyed any protected tree.

***What trees are exempt from permitting?*** The following tree species may be removed from private property without a permit:

- Australian Pine
- Brazilian Pepper
- Carrotwood
- Cherry Laurel
- Chinese Tallow
- Citrus
- Ear Tree
- Eucalyptus
- Fig Trees
- Indian Rosewood
- Norfolk Island Pine
- Orchid
- Palms (except Cabbage or Sabal)
- Paper Mulberry
- Punk
- Silk Oak
- Toog
- Woman's Tongue

***Do I need a permit to prune or trim a protected tree?*** Only if the tree is a Grand Tree. Canopy pruning and root pruning on any tree that qualifies as a Grand Tree shall be performed by or under the direct supervision of an Approved Arborist. The Parks Division will determine if the tree can tolerate the proposed pruning. If the tree is NOT a Grand Tree then trimming of trees as normal maintenance is exempt from permitting provided such trimming does not result in mutilation, death, or removal of the tree. Topping, excessive pruning, or the removal of more than 25 percent of the tree's leaf canopy is prohibited without a permit. The diameter of cuts should be kept to a minimum in relation to the trunk size.

***How much does a tree removal permit cost?*** The tree removal application fee is \$25.

### ***Do I have to replace the trees being removed?***

EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY HOME: For any tree removal, other than a Grand Tree, if the property still contains the minimum number of trees based on your lot size, a replacement tree will not be required. If the removal reduces the remaining trees below the minimum requirement, the

homeowner/applicant will be required to plant one replacement tree for a tree removal of less than 19 inches DBH and two replacement trees for 19 DBH inches or greater. For Grand Tree replacement questions please contact the city arborist.

ALL OTHER PROPERTIES: For all other properties, other than an existing single-family home, one caliper inch for each DBH inch removed shall be planted back on site. The minimum number of shade trees on the site shall meet requirements based on the total square feet of the property.

***My neighbor's tree is hanging over my property, can I prune it?*** Yes, provided proper pruning techniques are utilized. Typically, when pruning a neighboring tree, a reduction cut is required and rarely is removal of the entire limb necessary. Reduction cuts shorten the length of the branch that extends beyond the desired location. This process does not stub cut the limb vertically up the property line. However, it allows the overall length of the limb to be reduced by cutting back to the next live lateral branch at least 1/3 the diameter of the removed stem. Root pruning should only be done under the direction of a certified arborist to protect the critical root zone and stability of the tree. Flush cuts, stub cuts, lions-tailing, excessive thinning, and topping of trees are considered illegal pruning and may result in fines for each violation.

***What happens if a tree is illegally removed or pruned illegally beyond repair?*** If a tree is removed illegally or pruned illegally (effective removal) a fine of \$120 for existing single-family homes and \$240 for all other properties per DBH of the tree(s) will be issued. This fine is required to be paid within 30 days of the violation and all funds will be allocated to the City's tree bank. These monies are used to plant new trees throughout Dunedin.

***Can I plant a tree on my property?*** Yes, we strongly encourage homeowners to plant shade trees within their property. This will help protect and enhance the overall tree canopy of Dunedin. It is recommended that you plant the right tree in the right place, and plant it properly to ensure optimal success. Planting in the city right-of-ways or easements will require written permission from our Public Services Division.

***Who do I contact for a street tree, right-of-way, or easement tree maintenance?*** The Public Services Division coordinates this portion of tree care for the City, call 727-298-3232.

This brochure is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions regarding tree preservation, regulations, and ordinances within the City of Dunedin. If you need further information, contact the City Arborist at 727-2985-3279 or email [cityarborist@dunedinfl.net](mailto:cityarborist@dunedinfl.net).

