

**CITY OF GAINESVILLE
PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
TREE REMOVAL PERMITS AND TREE PRUNING
REGULATIONS SUMMARY – 12/1/2014**

Tree Removal Permits

Cost: Free

Application: Obtain tree removal permit application from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs office located at 306 NE 6th Ave, 3rd floor

OR

Log onto our website at:

<http://www.cityofgainesville.org/ParksRecreationCulturalAffairs/TreestheUrbanForest/TreeRemovalRegulations.aspx>

Every effort will be made to respond within five (5) working days of receipt of application. Tree inspection results or permit will be returned by mail, email or fax. Immediate inspections are not always possible, so please plan ahead. Permit applications can be sent via FAX to 352-334-3299 or email to the Urban Forestry Office at urbanforestry@cityofgainesville.org, or traditional mail to PO Box 490, Mail Station 24, Gainesville, FL 32627.

Tree Removal Permit Requirements

Detached single family homes (RSF1, RSF2, RSF3, or RSF4): Only heritage trees are regulated. Tree species of high quality are regulated anywhere on the property. All other heritage tree species are regulated in the legal setback.

For all other zoning designations: Tree removal permits are required for trees 8" in diameter except Slash and Loblolly Pine which require permits when they are 20" in diameter.

Commercial: All businesses and offices

Multi-family housing: Condominiums, triplex, apartments

Planned Developments: Rock Creek, Turkey Creek Forest, Sorrento, Blues Creek, Hillcrest, Kensington Park, Mill Pond, Walnut Creek, Vintage View, Lenox Place (not a complete list)

Note: All trees planted in parking lots, adjacent to the street or in areas which might be part of the approved landscape plan require permits, even if they are smaller than 8" in diameter.

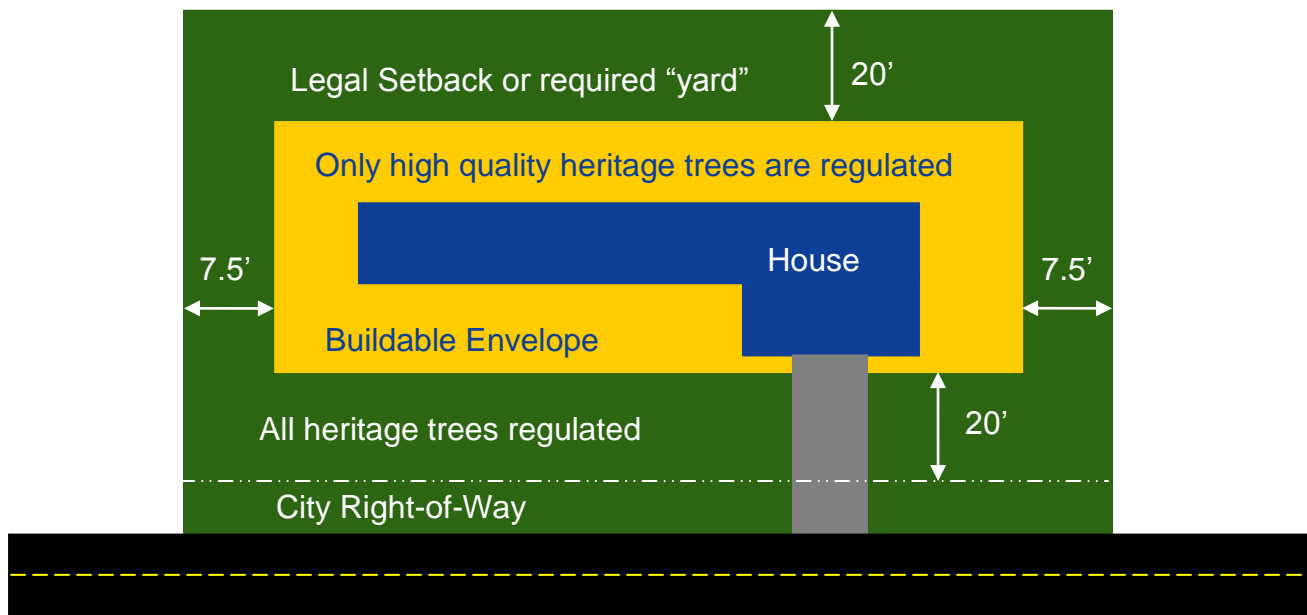
Definitions

Heritage trees: All native trees species are Heritage trees when they are larger than 20" in diameter, except for Water Oaks, Laurel Oaks, Sweetgums, and Loblolly Pines, which become Heritage trees at 30."

High Quality Species: Live Oak, Sand Live Oak, Bluff Oak, Basket Oak, Southern Red Oak, Southern Magnolia, Florida Maple, Longleaf Pine, Spruce Pine, Cedar Elm, Winged Elm, Florida Elm, Bald Cypress, Pond Cypress, Tupelo, Mockernut Hickory, Pignut Hickory, Pecan, Persimmon, Basswood, Tulip Poplar, White Ash, Green Ash and Yaupon, Dahoon, and American Holly species.

Legal Setbacks: The area between the lot line and a determine distance where structures are not allowed and must remain a "yard." Example: front: 20' from edge of right-of-way
back: 20' from the rear lot line
sides: 7.5' from the property edges on the sides

Precise distances vary depending on the neighborhood. If the tree is close to the house and inside the distances listed above, it won't need a permit. If you're not sure, the City Planning Division at 334-5023 can clarify the setback distance for the property in question.



Mitigation [Sec 30-254 (d)]: There are several factors that determine what the mitigation is for trees removed. The size (diameter), species, condition, and the zoning of the property will decide the mitigation. The standard mitigation is two – 15 gallon trees replanted for every one tree removed. Mitigation trees must be at least 8’ tall, 1.5” in trunk caliper, and Florida Nursery Grade #1. If there is not enough space for mitigation trees on site, as determined by the City Arborist, trees may be planted on other properties within the city limits or mitigation can be paid to the Tree Mitigation Fund. As the quality of tree species, condition and zoning regulations increase, so does the mitigation. Mitigation trees must be from the Gainesville Tree List. Please see a copy of “Sec. 30-254 Permits for tree removal; mitigation” for more details.

Trees Removed Without A Permit [Sec 30-312 (c) (2)]: If a heritage tree was removed without a permit then the required mitigation shall be double what is required as mitigation in section 30-254.

Permit Approval Criteria [Sec 30-254 (e)]: Removal or relocation of a regulated tree may be approved by the reviewing board, city manager or designee based upon one of the following findings:

- (1) that the tree poses a safety hazard or has been weakened by disease, age, storm, fire or other injury; or
- (2) that the tree contains a disease or infestation that could spread to other trees; or
- (3) that the tree prevents the reasonable development of the site, including the installation of solar energy equipment or the installation or replacement of utility lines; or
- (4) that the tree is causing or is likely to cause (as evidenced by competent substantial evidence) structural damage or problems to buildings or underground facilities due to excessive root or trunk growth, or soil expansion and contraction caused by uneven water uptake; or
- (5) should be removed for some other reason related to the public health or welfare. This finding cannot serve as the sole basis for removal of high quality trees.

Pruning Regulations [Sec. 30-256 (c)]: All trees may be pruned to maintain shape and promote their shade-giving qualities and to remove diseased or dying portions in areas where falling limbs could be a hazard to people or property. Tree pruning shall be done in accordance with the most current version of the American National Standard for Tree Care Operations "Tree, Shrub and Other Woody Plant Maintenance" (ANSI A300) and "Pruning, Trimming, Repairing, Maintaining, and Removing Trees, and Cutting Brush—Safety Requirements"(ANSI Z133). No more than 25 percent of the crown should be removed at one time. On young trees, limb removal shall leave no more than 33 percent of the trunk bare of branches. So that shade trees can grow with sturdy structure, the top branch or leader shall not be removed. Hooks shall not be used to climb trees unless the tree is being taken down. Mature trees overgrowing vehicular use areas shall be pruned to allow the passage of emergency vehicles. Excessive pruning, pollarding, or pruning of trees into round balls of crown or branches, which results in an unnecessary reduction of shade and promotes weak branch attachments is prohibited. If the city manager or designee finds same additional shade trees shall be required to be planted on the site on up to an inch-for-inch basis.