



TREES: THE NATURE OF KIRKLAND

The City of Kirkland is committed to protecting and enhancing trees as part of the community's urban forest and its valuable natural resources.

Why do we want trees?

- Trees provide several environmental benefits such as clean air and water, erosion control, and wildlife habitat.
- Mature trees can increase real estate values by as much as 20%.
- Trees provide shade and result in energy conservation by insulating temperatures.
- Trees provide effective visual and noise buffers.

Kirkland tree definitions to know:

“Significant tree” – any tree at least six (6) inches in diameter measured 4.5 feet above the ground.

“Hazard tree” – a tree with structural defects, disease, or both, which makes it subject to a high probability of failure in the opinion of a qualified professional retained or approved by the City (full criteria are in KZC 95.35.4).

“Nuisance tree” – a tree which is causing physical damage to property, or has been damaged by past maintenance practices, and for which generally accepted arboricultural practices cannot correct the problem (full criteria are in KZC 95.35.4). The City does not consider a nuisance tree as one that compromises views or requires normal maintenance activities such as fall raking or regular cleaning of gutters.

“Street tree” – a tree located within the street right-of-way.

Regulations on private property...NEW as of January 1, 2006!!!!



- The City allows up to two significant trees to be removed within a 12-month period from a lot of any size. *Completion of a Tree Removal Request Form is strongly encouraged to avoid illegal removals.* If the trees are one or both of the last two significant trees on site, replacement will be required. Removal of hazard or nuisance trees may require a Tree Plan IV.
- When developing property, an applicant must submit a Tree Plan. Contact the Planning Department for more information.
- In streams, wetlands, stream or wetland buffers, and in all Natural Growth Protection Easements a Tree Plan IV must be submitted before *any* work is done on trees.

To discuss your proposed removal of private trees contact the Planning Department at (425) 587-3225 or FAX question to (425) 587-3232 or come in to office at 123 5th Ave.

Regulations in right-of-way...

Homeowners have the responsibility of caring for street trees which abut their property (except in the Central Business District and City-identified rights-of-way). Normal tree maintenance includes necessary watering, mulching, weeding, and raking of leaves. Pruning should be at a minimum and be more in the context for pedestrian and vehicular clearance.



- If pruning, alteration, or removal of a street tree is needed, prior City approval is required.
- Street tree removal will only be approved when tree is a “nuisance tree” or “hazard tree”.

For approval of street tree work or to find out if your trees are in the right-of-way, contact Public Works at (425) 587-3908 or FAX question to (425) 587-3807 or come in to office at 123 5th Ave.

Regulations on City property...

Pruning, alteration, or removal of trees in parks or on other City property (e.g. City Hall and fire stations) is to be performed by the City.

Civil penalties are up to \$1,000 per tree and apply to illegal removal and unauthorized alteration of subject trees. ***Full restoration will be required.***

If you suspect illegal tree activity in your neighborhood, contact:

Street Trees: (425) 587-3900

Park Trees: (425) 587-3300

Private Trees: (425) 587-3225

After Hours Contact: (425) 587-3400

Kirkland's Guide to Pruning Basics

- Before pruning, ask yourself, “What am I trying to achieve by pruning?” Pruning is not meant to constantly control or drastically reduce the size of a tree. Consider that the tree may be inappropriate for its location in cases where this is needed.
- Good pruning can benefit the tree by removing potential hazards, increase interior light and air circulation, improve form and correct weaknesses, control decay, and promote longevity of the tree.
- Most trees seldom require pruning other than removing dead or damaged branches. However, young trees may benefit from light pruning every few years to establish the maturing shape. A good time for general pruning is winter. Early summer pruning can help control the growth of the tree.
- When pruning, remove at most 25% of the total leaf area. Less is generally better for the tree. After an extensive pruning (one that approaches 25% removal), give the tree two years to recover before pruning again.
- Homeowners may be able to prune using only a hand-saw and a ladder. For larger trees, contact these websites for a list of certified arborists:
 - International Society of Arboriculture
www.isa-arbor.com
 - Pacific Northwest Chapter of ISA
www.pnwisa.org

Healthy Pruning Techniques	Improper Pruning Techniques
<p>Crown Cleaning – removing dead, dying, diseased, crowded, weakly-attached, or low-vigor branches. Done correctly, this should not reduce the canopy.</p>	<p>Topping - the cutting of a trunk or main branch to the point where there is no branch large enough <u>and</u> vigorous enough to become the new leader. This has been widely done in the past, but is now inappropriate for several reasons.</p>
<p>Crown Thinning – selective removal of branches throughout the crown of the tree to improve interior light and air. Remaining branches should be well-distributed and balanced.</p>	<p>Stripping – the branches from the inner section of trunk or branch (also called “liontailing”). This can result in structural imbalances and potential failure of the tree.</p>
<p>Crown Raising – removal of the lower branches of the tree to provide height clearance, typically 8’ for pedestrians and 16’ for vehicles.</p>	<p>Imbalances – in pruning disrupt the structure of the tree. This can cause cracking damage from the wind through twisting. It may also cause weak new growth.</p>
<p>Windowing – removing several branches symmetrically within an area of the tree’s crown to enhance views (on private trees only).</p>	<p>Excessive Pruning – can kill a tree. Stripping away branches can starve the tree and/or invite decay and disease into the tree.</p>

For approval of pruning plans for street trees, contact Public Works: (425) 587-3908

References:

- Plant Amnesty www.plantamnesty.org
 National Arbor Day Foundation www.arborday.org
 WSU Cooperative Extension
 Master Gardeners <http://gardening.wsu.edu>
 An Illustrated Guide to Pruning By Edward Gilman