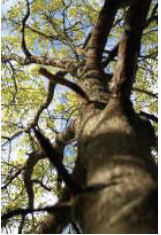




September 2008

## TREE MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL



### Q. Why are Trees important?

Trees are an important part of every community. They contribute to their environment by conserving water, improving air quality, moderating the effects of the sun, rain and wind, preserving soil, providing oxygen, and supporting wildlife.

Trees absorb and store rainwater which reduce runoff and sediment deposit after storms. This helps the ground water supply recharge, prevents the transport of chemicals into streams, and prevents flooding. Fallen leaves make excellent compost that enriches soil.

Trees also provide many neighborhoods a great source of town pride as very old trees serve as historic landmarks. And well-placed trees can also serve as sound barriers by muffling noise from roadways and other urban activities. It is for many of these reasons that the planting of trees as well as the removal of trees is specifically regulated by Hillsborough County's Land Development Code.

### Q. Do I need a permit to remove a tree?

In most cases, the answer is yes! However, there are certain species of trees which are exempt from permitting requirements, and there are other circumstances under which a permit may not be required for tree removal. If you are considering the removal of a tree, you are encouraged to contact the County's Natural Resources Unit to ensure that removal is done in accordance with the Land Development Code.

### Q. What is a "Grand Oak?"

A grand oak is defined by the Land Development Code as:

- a tree of the genus *Quercus* with a trunk measuring 34 inches Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) and greater;

- a condition rating of good or better in accordance to the Tree Condition Evaluation Form referenced as Section 4.1.6.1.9 of the Development Review Procedures Manual, and
- whose trunk circumference, height and crown measurements are of the size and character to total a minimum 175 points in accordance to the Tree Point System methodology.

These trees are afforded special protection by the Land Development Code and can only be removed when authorized for removal by the Zoning Administrator.

### Q. Can I prune a "Grand Oak" tree?

Pruning of a grand oak, with the exception of minor pruning, is prohibited unless conducted in accordance with the ANSI A 300 Pruning Standards as performed by an Arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or a Registered Consulting Arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA). A notarized affidavit affirming an ISA Certified Arborist or an ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist will conduct or onsite supervise the pruning shall be submitted to the County prior to the pruning of a grand oak. An ISA Certified Arborist or an ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist contracted by a property owner to prune a grand oak shall assume full responsibility for all pruning activities determined in noncompliance with standards specified within the Land Development Code.

### Q. How can I report a suspected violation to the County?

Suspected violations of this Code should be reported to the Hillsborough County Natural Resources Unit of the Planning and Growth Management Department. The department can be reached by calling **813-272-5920**. Violations can also be reported online through the department's Web site at [www.hillsboroughcounty.org/pgm/landdevelopment/natural.cfm](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/pgm/landdevelopment/natural.cfm).

