Vancouver Tree Regulations and Permits

To maintain a healthy urban forest and quality of life in Vancouver, trees are protected by the Tree Conservation Ordinance (VMC 20.770) and the Street Tree Ordinance (VMC 12.04). Before removing any tree, call Urban Forestry at (360) 619-1132 to check if a permit is required.

Street Trees

The adjacent property owner is responsible for maintenance of street trees; the City maintains street trees where no adjacent property owner exists. A permit is required for major pruning or removal of street trees.

Property Lines

A property owner may prune branches that overhang the property line, providing that the pruning does not harm the health or structure of the tree. Be a good neighbor and work together to resolve issues regarding vegetation on property lines.

Utility Lines

Call Clark Public Utilities (360) 992-3000 for service or to report problems. Always contact locates at (877) 668-4001 before you dig.

Getting Involved

NeighborWoods Stewards receive 20 hours of free education. In exchange, stewards serve as a resource for their neighborhood and coordinate a planting or educational project.

Tree Talk is a series of FREE, educational workshops that occur throughout the year.

Tree Planting work parties take place throughout the fall and winter; plantings occur in both natural areas and neighborhoods. Your neighborhood may need a Friends of Trees **Neighborhood Coordinator**.

For information about these and other **volunteer opportunities** and events, visit the Urban Forestry online at **www.cityofvancouver.us/urbanforestry**

City of Vancouver Urban Forestry

A Citizen's Guide to Trees in Vancouver

The City of Vancouver is committed to managing its urban forests to preserve and enhance this valuable community resource for the good fo the environment, the economy and, the health and well-being of current residents and future generations.

Vancouver...a commuinty that grows with trees

This is an exciting time to live in Vancouver! Our community is experiencing growth and development that is breathing new vitality into our neighborhoods. With this change can come significant loss of the urban tree canopy. We must all take steps to preserve and enhance the urban forest today to ensure a high quality of life for future generations.

What we do in our landscapes has a direct impact on our water quality. Planting, maintaining and properly preserving trees is the cheapest and easiest way to help manage stormwater. Here are some simple steps you can take to protect our water quality: replace high maintenance turf with Northwest-friendly plantings; plant yard and street trees; use organic mulch; preserve and properly maintain existing trees; and reduce use of pesticides.

Vancouver is a city that cares about its trees, and has been designated as a Tree City USA since 1989!

Benefits of Trees

Trees provide important environmental, social and economic benefits for all. One mature tree:
~ intercept 760 gallons of rainfall
~ produce 260 pounds of oxygen
~ absorb 10 pounds of airborne pollutants
~ sequester 100 pounds of carbon dioxide
~ provide food and habitat for wildlife
~increase your home's value up to 20%
~dramatically reduce heating and cooling costs when strategically planted in your yard.

Canopy Restoration Program

In 2011 Vancouver updated the Tree Canopy Cover Assessment. The current tree canopy is 18.6 percent, much less than the 40 percent that American Forests recommends. The City's goal is to increase canopy to 28 percent. Since 67 percent of the existing urban forest is on private lands, everyone has a role to play in preserving and enhancing our urban forest.

You can help achieve the goal of 28 percent tree canopy by planting trees:
~ in your own yard or street planting strip
~ in your neighborhood, by working with the non-profit Friends of Trees
~ at a natural area volunteer project

Northwest Native Plants and Invasive Species

Consider planting tree and shrub species native to the region. Since they are adapted to the local climate and soils, they require less water and chemicals. They also provide important food and habitat for native wildlife. Native vegetation helps maintain Vancouver's identity as a Pacific Northwest city. Invasive plant species such as English ivy, English holly and Himalayan blackberry should be removed.

Because humans have such a huge impact on the urban forest, it is our responsibility to act as wise stewards of the land and trees.

Guidelines for Proper Tree Care

No Topping!
"Topping" is defined as indiscriminate cutting of branches to stubs or branches too small to assume the terminal role. It is very harmful to trees and NEVER an acceptable practice.

Hire an ISA certified arborist
Arborists certified by the International Society of Arboriculture follow nationally recognized tree care standards. Care for your trees by hiring an ISA arborist for any major tree work.

New Tree Care
Newly planted trees need three to five years to get established. For the first couple of years, provide 5 to 10 gallons of water every week during dry periods. Most trees won't require irrigation once established. After a few years, prune trees to improve structure. Remove stakes and ties after one growing season.

Mulch/Lawnmower Damage
Maintain a 3-feet-diameter area around the tree that is clear of grass and weeds. A 4-inch layer of organic mulch will help retain soil moisture, provide nutrients and suppress weeds. To prevent serious damage by lawnmowers and string trimmers, never mow or trim up to a tree's trunk.

Sidewalk / Street Issues
Maintain safe sidewalk and street access by pruning trees to provide 8 feet of clearance over sidewalks and 12 feet over streets. Tree roots can sometimes damage sidewalks. *This* can be prevented by turning off irrigation after the third year and by planting the right tree in the right place. If you do have sidewalk damage, it is often possible to prune the roots of the tree before repairing the concrete. **Keep leaves out of streets and storm drains by recycling them in your yard debris cart.**