

Tree & Landscape Maintenance

Informational Guide

Tree and landscape maintenance is to establish consistent standards that protect required plantings, preserve native vegetation, and maintain the visual quality of developed areas. These practices also support environmental health by reducing pollution and conserving water through sustainable methods such as native plants, organic mulch, reduced turf, and efficient irrigation.

In addition, trees and well-designed landscaping provide significant long-term benefits, including producing oxygen, conserving energy by shading buildings, filtering and slowing stormwater, creating a cooling canopy that reduces heat, absorbing noise, reducing glare, supporting habitat areas for wildlife, and contributing to increased property values.

Property owners are responsible for maintaining their required landscaping in a healthy condition. The following maintenance practices represent common requirements necessary to ensure the long-term survival, appearance, and overall health of required plantings. Regular upkeep helps preserve the intended function of landscaped and open-space areas while preventing deterioration, safety hazards, and non-compliant conditions.

- **Minimum Required Landscaping:** Properties with an approved Development Order (DO) must maintain all landscaping required on their most recent DO in perpetuity, regardless of what existed when the property was purchased. A new DO or Limited Review Development Order (LDO) can be applied for, if minor landscape changes/updates are needed. [Document Search](#)
- **Pruning:** Required trees and shrubs must be properly pruned to maintain healthy, natural growth, uphold required heights, avoid severe cutting or forced size reduction, and prevent conflicts with surrounding site features. Severely pruned trees may require replacement.
- **Mulch Standards:** Appropriate organic mulch should be applied and maintained to help retain moisture, protect roots and trunks from lawn care equipment, and support healthy growth. County staff recommends the use of pine straw mulch. The use of cypress mulch is strongly discouraged. Sand, gravel, rock, or shell are not appropriate mulch materials.
- **Tree Staking Removal:** Remove all tree stakes and ties within twelve months of installation to prevent girdling, structural weakness, and long-term damage.
- **Removal of Prohibited Invasive/Exotic Vegetation:** Eliminate invasive/exotic plant species to protect native vegetation. [Vegetation Removal Permit Informational Guide](#)
- **Vine, Weed, and Trash Removal:** Keep landscaped areas free of vines, weeds, litter, and debris to maintain appearance and prevent plant competition.
- **Irrigation System Maintenance:** Ensure irrigation systems are functioning properly, provide adequate coverage and conserve water.
- **Open Space Maintenance:** Maintain designated open-space areas in a clean, natural condition, and prevent non-compliant uses such as storage, parking, or encroachment.

Additional Resources

Lee County Land Development Code (LDC):

Tree & Landscape Maintenance Informational Guide

[Lee County Land Development Code Chapter 10, Article III, Division 6 - Open space, buffering, and landscaping](#)

Pruning Information:

- [Best Management Practices - Tree Pruning - ANSI A300](#) (account registration and sign in may be required)
- [Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance – ANSI \(A300\)](#) (account registration and sign in may be required)
- [Pruning Palms - University of Florida](#)
- [Pruning Landscaping Trees and Shrubs - University of Florida](#)
- [Why Topping Hurts Trees - Florida ISA](#)

Landscaping Resources:

- [Florida Chapter International Society of Arboriculture ISA - Florida ISA](#)
- [Landscape Plants - University of Florida](#)
- [Tree Owner Resources - TreesAreGood/Florida ISA](#)
- [Proper Mulching Techniques - TreesAreGood/Florida ISA](#)
- [Lee County Natural Resources Irrigation Restrictions - LeeGov](#)