

## Hurricane Damaged Landscape

### Tree Removal & Replacement Requirements

If a tree on your property was a tree required by the City's Landscape Code and was destroyed/is dead, removal without a permit is authorized. These instances should be documented by the property owner for verification.

Replacement of required trees is mandatory. Each tree removed must be replaced with a new tree which meets the code minimum landscape requirements listed below.

#### Code Minimum Landscape Requirements:

- Replacement trees must be Florida No. 1 or better, as set out in Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Parts I and II, Department of Agriculture, State of Florida (as amended). Root ball sizes on all transplanted plant materials must also meet state standards.
- At the time of installation, code required trees must be a minimum of ten feet in height, have a two-inch trunk caliper 12 inches above the ground, and a four-foot crown spread. Palms must have a minimum of eight feet of clear trunk at planting.
- Trees/palms shall be replaced like for like (e.g., native hardwood for native hardwood). The same species of tree, while generally recommended, is not required. Please see the list *Native Trees & Palms for use in Bonita Springs*.
- A plant's growth habit must be considered in advance of conflicts that might be created (e.g., views, signage, overhead power lines, lighting, site circulation, etc.). Trees should not be placed where they interfere with site drainage, subsurface utilities, overhead utility lines, or where they will require excessive pruning to avoid interference with overhead power lines.
- After watering-in, a two-inch minimum layer of mulch or other recycled materials must be placed and maintained around all newly installed trees, palms. Each tree should have a ring of mulch no less than 24 inches beyond its trunk in all directions. No more than a one-inch layer of mulch should be placed within the first six inches from the trunk. The use of cypress mulch is strongly discouraged.
- Tree and palm staking must be removed within 12 months after installation. Most trees only require a few months of staking to stabilize.
- Pruning - Required vegetation may only be pruned to promote healthy, uniform, natural growth of the vegetation in accordance with "Pruning Standards," as

revised, of the National Arborist Association. Trees must not be severely pruned to permanently maintain growth at a reduced height or spread.

If a required tree has been damaged but is not dead, a *Tree Removal Permit* is required. The application may be found [here](#) or in the Building Permit office at 9220 Bonita Beach Road, Ste. 111.

To determine if a tree is “Required” ask the following questions:

*Does the development/site have a Local Development Order (Construction Plans) issued on or after 1983?*

- If the answer is yes, most single family lots require two (2) native hardwood trees per lot. Commercial and Multifamily development/sites should refer to their approved Landscape Plans for tree count specifics.

*Was the development/site constructed prior to 2008 (under Lee County Review)?*

- If yes, you can search for a copy of *County* approved Landscape Plan which may be found online at the [Lee County Community Development Website](#).

*Is the tree in a preserve, indigenous area, or protected wetland?*

- If so, it is protected, please leave it in place, as its removal may also require state permitting/approval.

Please contact The City of Bonita Springs Community Development - Environmental Sciences Staff at (239-444-6150) prior to removal if any of the following situations exist:

- If you need to locate approved Landscape Plans on or after 2008 to determine if it is a tree/palm that needs to be replaced.
- If the tree height is within 1.5 times the distance of a structure or there are concerns about fire hazards.
- If there are multiple trees in one location requiring heavy machinery to remove.
- If there are any other questions or clarifications needed.

All naturally occurring native trees, palms, and vegetative communities are protected by the City’s Tree Protection Ordinance and Land Development Code. Required landscape trees, palms, and vegetation are also protected. Any violation of these regulations may be subject to enforcement through a restoration planting plan which can include replanting with a greater amount of vegetation than previously required.