

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I preserve the existing trees on my site instead of planting new trees?

Yes. Tree preservation is the preferred method. An acceptable barricade must be placed around the drip line of the trees prior to lot clearing. The trees should be identified on the plans submitted with the Tree Permit Application and once the permit is issued a barricade inspection must be scheduled by calling (941)743-1204. Barricades must remain in place throughout construction.

How many trees are needed in order to comply with the Tree Ordinance?

Compliance with the code is based on the number of Tree Points rather than the number of trees.

How many tree points are needed to receive a Certificate of Occupancy?

One tree point is required for every 2,000 square feet, or fraction thereof, of development site.

How are trees measured?

By their "caliper", which is the diameter of the tree trunk measured 12" from grade.

What size must installed trees be in order to count toward points?

The minimum size allowable for points is two caliper inches (2") with a minimum height of eight feet (8') from grade.

Do citrus trees count for points? No.

Is speculative clearing allowed?

No! "Speculative clearing" or prepping a lot without intention to build is prohibited in Charlotte County.

What is a prohibited tree? An invasive or exotic species which disrupts natural habitats or is otherwise destructive. The planting of prohibited trees is strictly forbidden.

Heritage Trees

What is a Heritage Tree?

A tree and its root system within the Cypress, Oak, or Pine species which has a minimum 30-inch trunk diameter at diameter at breast height (DBH). In the case of multi-stemmed trees where there is a union of wood above grade, the DBH shall be measured at each stem and added together to reach a minimum of a 45-inch diameter.

Heritage Trees have additional protections provided in Section 3-9-100.3(e). No person shall cut down, remove, relocate, or in any way damage a Heritage Tree.

In some cases, the removal of a Heritage Tree may be authorized. A determination from a certified arborist may be required if the tree is in advanced stages of decline. If the tree is causing substantial structural or infrastructural damage, a qualified engineer of record must provide documentation that removal of the tree is the only remedy. If the tree is located where a structure or improvement allowed as a permitted principal use under zoning regulations is to be located and the applicant has made every effort to accommodate the Heritage Tree within the design of the structure or improvement,

Heritage Trees shall be replaced on a DBH-inch for DBH-inch basis. If site-specific conditions limit or prevent the replacement of trees on site, the applicant shall pay \$150.00 per DBH inch not replanted. These fees go into the Native Tree Replacement Fund.



Current Planning & Zoning Division

Tree Permit Basics



All proposed site development must first obtain a Charlotte County Tree Permit approved by the Community Development Department before any clearing of the site may begin.

Charlotte County Government
Community Development Department
18400 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Phone: 941.743.1964
Fax: 941.743.1598
www.charlottecountyfl.gov

What information must be provided in order for a Tree Permit Application to be considered complete?

The completed application must contain the following information:

Applicant information – identify contractor name, mailing address, phone number and license number or owner/builder name and pertinent information along with a completed notarized affidavit

Property information - job address and legal description

Type of application requested – check the line next to the situation that applies:

- 1 - Tree Preservation - indicate number of trees to be preserved
- 2 - Tree Removal Authorization - indicate number of trees removed that do not meet the exemption criteria of Section 3-9-100.3: Tree Requirements of the Charlotte County Code (fee of \$1 per caliper inch)
- 3 - Memorandum of Exemption of Fees - indicate number of trees removed that meet the exemption criteria of Section 3-9-100.3 (h) of the Charlotte County Code (exempt from \$1 per caliper inch fee only)
- 4 - No Tree Affidavit - use only if **no** trees equal to 4 caliper inches or greater are on the property. **Must** have notary signature.

Applicant's signature and date

Items to be submitted as part of the tree permit application

- A tree survey, signed and sealed by a surveyor, arborist, engineer, registered landscape architect, or other professional, consisting of a scaled drawing indicating:
 - All Heritage Trees on site
 - The location, types, sizes (in caliper inches) of all existing trees overlaid on a site plan of the building, parking, and other site amenities. Identify the trees proposed to be removed, preserved and relocated. The plan scale must be suitable for evaluation.
- Spreadsheet of trees to be removed (types and caliper inches)

What is the average time required to review a Tree Permit Application?

Depending on the complexity of the plans and the degree to which the plans are in compliance, a review can take anywhere from 1 day to 5 days to complete. Plans that are not approvable must be revised to come into minimum compliance with Charlotte County Code and be resubmitted for review prior to approval.

Additional Information

Fee Requirements:

Tree permit review fee for commercial and multi-family sites (plus \$1/inch removed)	<u>\$80.00</u>
Tree permit review fee for single-family and duplex sites (plus \$1/inch removed)	<u>\$70.00</u>
Environmental Inspections*	
*Required for all lot clearing applications	<u>\$55.00</u>
Resubmittals	<u>\$50.00</u>



Tree Trimming

For trees located on your own property, permits are not required for trimming or pruning. All tree pruning shall be conducted according to National Arborist Association standards.

The "topping" or "lollipop" of trees is strictly prohibited.

For trees located in rights-of-way, please contact the Public Works Department at 941-575-3600