

PALO ALTO TREE ORDINANCE INFORMATION UPDATES #1 PROTECTED TREE DEFINITION

PROTECTED TREES

Did you know? Under the new Tree Protection Ordinance the definition of what is a "Protected" tree was greatly expanded!



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Full list of protected tree types:
cityofpaloalto.org/treeordinance

In June of 2022, the City of Palo Alto updated its [Tree Protection Ordinance](#). This is a PDF version of the email updates that have been sent out to local Certified Arborists, urban forestry advocates and Tree Care Companies that operate in (or near) Palo Alto.

This update will highlight changes to the definition of Protected Trees in Palo Alto. Other updates will follow in the coming weeks covering other aspects of the updated ordinance. If you missed an update you can download PDF's of past updates from the list on our [Tree Ordinance Information](#) page.

The new ordinance section [PAMC 8.10.020](#) describes the specific categories of Protected Trees. Protected trees may not be removed without a Protected Tree Removal Permit issued by Palo Alto Urban Forestry. Protected trees must also be maintained according to the best practices described in the existing Tree Technical Manual and the forthcoming Tree & Landscape Technical Manual.

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The categories of protected trees are:

Locally Native Protected Species Trees

[Big Leaf Maple \(*Acer macrophyllum*\)](#) 11.5" or more DBH

[California Incense Cedar \(*Calocedrus decurrens*\)](#) 11.5" or more DBH

[Coast Live Oak \(*Quercus agrifolia*\)](#) 11.5" or more DBH

[Blue Oak \(*Quercus douglasii*\)](#) 11.5" or more DBH

[California Black Oak \(*Quercus kelloggii*\)](#) 11.5" or more DBH

[Valley Oak \(*Quercus lobata*\)](#) 11.5" or more DBH

[Coast Redwood \(*Sequoia sempervirens*\)](#) 18" or more DBH

Protected Mature Trees

Any mature tree measuring 15" or more DBH

Invasive species trees and high water use trees are excluded. See our list of excluded trees included below.

Designated Trees

Any tree designated for protection during review and approval of a development project.

Public Trees / Street Trees

"Public trees" include any tree, in any street, park, or public place in the city of Palo Alto. "Street Tree" refers to the Public Trees located in the city road right of way.

Carbon Sequestration or Environmental Mitigation Trees

Any tree designated for carbon sequestration and storage and/or environmental mitigation purposes.

Heritage Trees

Any heritage tree designated by the City Council. The terms "Protected Tree" and "Heritage Tree" are NOT interchangeable. As of 2023, there are eight total Heritage Trees in Palo Alto. See the [Heritage Tree List](#) for more information.

Replacement Mitigation Trees

Any replacement mitigation tree or other tree designated to be planted due to the conditions listed in the ordinance.

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Tree Species Exempt from Protection

[PAMC 8.10.020](#) includes the following exemptions from the Protected Mature Trees category: "...except those invasive species described as weeds in Section 8.08.010 (Invasive plants, shrubs, hedges, and trees having high potential to invade adjacent properties and high ecological impacts in the region as defined by the California Invasive Plant Council.) and those species classified as high water users by the water use classification of the landscape species list approved by the California Department of Water Resources (with the exception of Coast Redwood)."

The following tables lists tree species currently exempt from protection as a member of the Protected Mature Trees Category. For a full list of species considered invasive, please see the [California Invasive Plant Council website](#). For a full list of landscape species and their associated water requirements, please see the [Water Use Classification of Landscape Species \(WUCOLS\)](#) List.

EXEMPT- HIGH WATER USERS

Species Name	Common Name	List Category
<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	white alder	High Water Use
<i>Alnus rubra (Alnus oregona)</i>	red alder	High Water Use
<i>Araucaria columnaris (A. cookii)</i>	New Caledonian pine	High Water Use
<i>Betula spp.</i>	Birch Species	High Water Use
<i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i>	dawn redwood	High Water Use
<i>Populus trichocarpa (P. balsamifera)</i>	black cottonwood	High Water Use
<i>Populus x canadensis</i>	Carolina poplar	High Water Use
<i>Salix spp.</i>	willow species	High Water Use

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EXEMPT- INVASIVE

Species Name	Common Name	List Category
<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver wattle	Invasive, Cal-IPC
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	blackwood acacia	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree-of-heaven	Invasive, Cal-IPC
<i>Cotoneaster spp.</i>	Cotoneaster species	Invasive, Cal-IPC
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	English hawthorn	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Elauagnus angustifolia</i>	Russian olive	Invasive, Cal-IPC
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	Red Gum	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	Blue gum	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Fraxinus uhdei</i>	Evergreen ash	Fruit
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Edible fig	Invasive, Cal-IPC
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	English holly	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>	Cajeput tree	State of CA
<i>Myoporum laetum</i>	ngaio tree	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Olea europaea</i>	European olive	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>	Canary Island date palm	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Populus spp.</i>	Poplar, cottonwood	Downy fruit
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	cherry plum	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	black locust	Cal-IPC, PlantRight
<i>Schinus terebinthefolius</i>	Brazilian pepper	Invasive, Cal-IPC
<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Mexican fan palm	Invasive, Cal-IPC

Thank you for helping us maintain a vibrant and healthy urban forest!



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NEW TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE INFORMATION

