

Considerations for Building on a Site with Trees



It is important to know which regulations afford protection to trees and vegetation in the District of Saanich. Awareness of tree issues and requirements is important at every stage from planning, design, engineering and construction, to landscaping.

The [Tree Protection Bylaw](#) contains regulations which protect certain trees. Protected trees as defined by the Tree Protection Bylaw cannot be altered, cut, damaged or removed without first obtaining a tree cutting permit.

Permit Fees, Security Deposits and Tree Replacement Requirements

Tree-cutting permit fees, security deposits and tree replacements at the applicant's expense are required as a condition of tree cutting permits related to rezoning, subdivision, development permit, development variance permit, blasting permit, building permit, fill permit and plumbing permit applications.

Circumstance	Fees & Security Deposits	Replacement Trees
Building, Plumbing, Fill or Blasting Permits or Subdivision	\$40 application fee for first tree \$25 per additional tree \$300 security deposit for each required replacement tree	1:1 tree replacement
Rezoning and/or Development Permit Application - Within the Building Footprint	\$75 application fee for the first tree \$25 per additional tree \$300 security deposit for each required replacement tree Tree credit system to encourage retention of trees	1:1 tree replacement
Rezoning and/or Development Permit Application Outside of the Building Footprint	\$75 application fee for the first tree \$25 per additional tree \$300 security deposit for each required replacement tree Tree credit system to encourage retention of trees	2:1 tree replacement outside of building footprint for offsite services, roads or access routes

The Tree Protection Bylaw requires a property owner or applicant to provide relevant tree related information when applying for any Rezoning, Subdivision, Development Permit, Development Variance Permit, Building/ Demolition Permit, Blasting Permit, Fill Permit or Plumbing Permit.

The relevant tree related information required under s. 20 of the Tree Protection Bylaw may include: Legal Survey Plan, Arborist Report including mitigation options and Tree Preservation Summary, Site Plan or Building Plan.

An **Arborist Report** will be required when:

- A Tree Risk Assessment is required which provides the reasons why a tree is at high risk to fail and needs to be removed.
- There are protected trees on-site, or any off-site trees which could be affected by the proposed development.
- A tree infraction has occurred and a report is needed to detail the repair work for the tree.
- Requested by the Director of Parks and Recreation (Tree Protection Bylaw No. 9272, Section 20).

On-site: Protected trees; all trees over 5m in height or 10cm in diameter located within a Development Permit Area; all vegetation located within an Environmental or Streamside Development Permit Area must be considered for retention.

Off-site: Trees on neighbouring properties must be protected. Tree removals may be considered when the trees fall within the removal criteria of the bylaw and the owner agrees.

Public trees: Boulevard and park trees (regardless of size) must be protected with tree protection barriers unless removal has been authorized by the Parks Department.

CRZ: Critical Root Zone

DBH: Diameter at Breast Height

Protected Trees

The following trees taller than 2m in height or 4cm in diameter 15cm above natural grade:

Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*)
 Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*)
 Pacific Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*)
 Pacific Yew (*Taxus brevifolia*)

Or the following trees having a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 30cm or larger:

Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
 Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*)
 Big Leaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)
 Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*)

And:

- any other tree having a DBH of 60cm or larger
- any replacement trees
- any tree 10cm DBH or larger or 5m or more in height located within a Streamside Development Permit Area or Environmental Development Permit Area designated in the Saanich Official Community Plan
- any tree planted or retained as a requirement of a subdivision application, blasting permit, building permit, fill permit or a plumbing permit
- any significant trees (Schedule B of Tree Protection Bylaw 9272),
- any tree with evidence of a nest or use by: raptors as defined in the *Wildlife Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c.488, osprey or a heron colony

Arborist Report

The Arborist Report is necessary to professionally assess the trees on the site. Saanich has specific guidelines for what must be included in a report, including tables and maps. The requirements are listed in **Arborist Report Specifications**. Errors or incomplete submissions of this information will also result in requests for resubmission. Missing trees and incorrect location of tree protection barriers can also result in delay of actual construction and require payment of fines for tree damage due to building design calculations based on incorrect information.

ARBORIST REPORT SPECIFICATIONS

Guidelines and Checklist

- Name of arborist and company, address, phone number and email address
- Arborist ISA certification number and Tree Risk Assessor number (for hazard tree evaluations)
- Name and contact information of client with email address, if possible
- Civic address of property in question
- Saanich Project File Number when appropriate
- Date of the report
- Date and time of site visit
- Weather at time of site visit
- Site conditions
- Brief description of work and/or development on property when appropriate
- All tree numbers listed in numerical order
- Mitigation options
- Photographs
- Tree Preservation Summary
- Signature of Arborist
- Must be typewritten

Description of trees included in the arborist report to include:

- Species (scientific and common names)
- Diameter at DBH to the nearest 1 cm to be verified by Arborist
- Condition (crown/trunk/roots) may include:
 - Structural integrity (cracks/included bark/structural weakness)
 - Deadwood (%)
 - Vigour
 - Insect infestations (what type)
 - Pathological concerns (what type)
 - Fungal fruiting bodies evident
 - Decay evident at unions, base or elsewhere (Resistography or Topography)
 - Causing damage to structures
 - Significant lean
 - Live crown ratio
- Location – either by survey plan or for small projects overhead maps
- Tag number
- Tree inventory in table format
- Tree Risk Assessment with all three numbers showing how assessment was determined
- History
- Photographs
 - Must be labelled by tree id # and contain a description of what is being shown in each
 - Include image of the entire Tree
 - Include a close up of problem areas
 - Entire site showing trees being reviewed
- All other pertinent information

Tree Assessment Reports

An arborist's tree assessment report submitted to the District of Saanich is required to be sufficiently clear and comprehensive that the municipal arborist does not need to attend the site to clarify any detail.

Mitigation Measures for Retained Trees

Any recommendations for retention must provide detailed descriptions of mitigation measures for trees to be retained. These measures must include the tree protection barriers with the location and dimensions of the barriers shown on the site plan, as well as provide detailed descriptions of mitigation measures for retained trees and other site-specific measures as deemed necessary by the arborist.

This may include, but not limited to:

- Arborist Supervision
- Relocation of retaining walls and perimeter drainage
- relocation of utility installation or connections
- Suspended slabs if working in Critical Root Zones
- Raised driveways or slabs on granular material (with plans)
- Hand-digging, air spade excavation, hydro-vac excavation
- Root pruning
- Construction of tree wells
- Boring or tunneling under roots to avoid impacts
- Tree Pruning
- Tree Surgery including cabling or bracing union
- Watering/irrigation
- Mulching
- Fertilization
- Drainage
- Wildlife hazard trees located in environmentally sensitive areas or undeveloped areas with no targets
- Risk to people or property
- The placement of gravel/structural soil/mulch/planking; require presence of an arborist during work in the vicinity of tree
- Any other recommended form of mitigation

Tree Preservation Summary

Summary of proposed tree removal, trees retained and tree replacement:

- Number of protected trees identified
- Number of protected trees removed
- Number of protected trees retained
- Number of replacement trees proposed
- Number of replacement trees in deficit
- Total number of retained trees and trees on site
- Number of lots proposed on this project
- Average number of trees on site (replacement and retained)
- Plan showing the species, number and placement of replacement trees
- Signature of Arborist and date



Tree Protection Fencing

What is the protected root zone?

It is the area of land surrounding the trunk of a tree that contains the bulk of the critical root system. These roots are important to the structural integrity and health of the tree.

What is the purpose of protective tree fencing?

Tree protection barriers are placed around trees at the protected root zone to prevent tree trunks, branches and roots that could be damaged by any construction activities/operations.

Under what conditions is protective tree fencing required?

Prior to issuing a tree permit to accommodate development, any trees that are to be retained, on the property or adjacent property, must have tree protection barriers installed and inspected. A tree permit will not be issued until this is completed.

Tree Protection Barriers are to be installed and remain upright and in place throughout the entire construction process. Trees of any size on boulevards must be protected.

Nothing may be put inside or against the Tree Protection Barriers including, but not limited to:

- garbage/debris storage
- material or equipment storage
- portapotties
- soil piling, fill or grade changes
- surface treatments or excavations of any kind equipment fueling or chemical mixing

Failure to meet these specifications will result in inspection failure and subsequent delay in issuance of other permits.

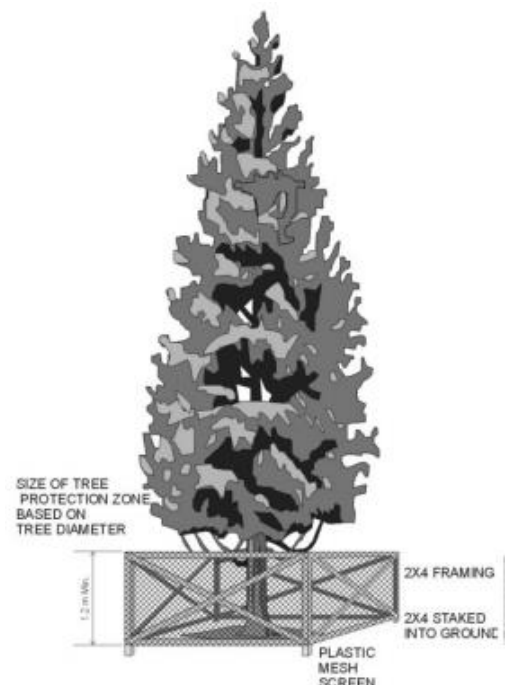
What if there are obstacles underneath the tree preventing installation of the fencing?

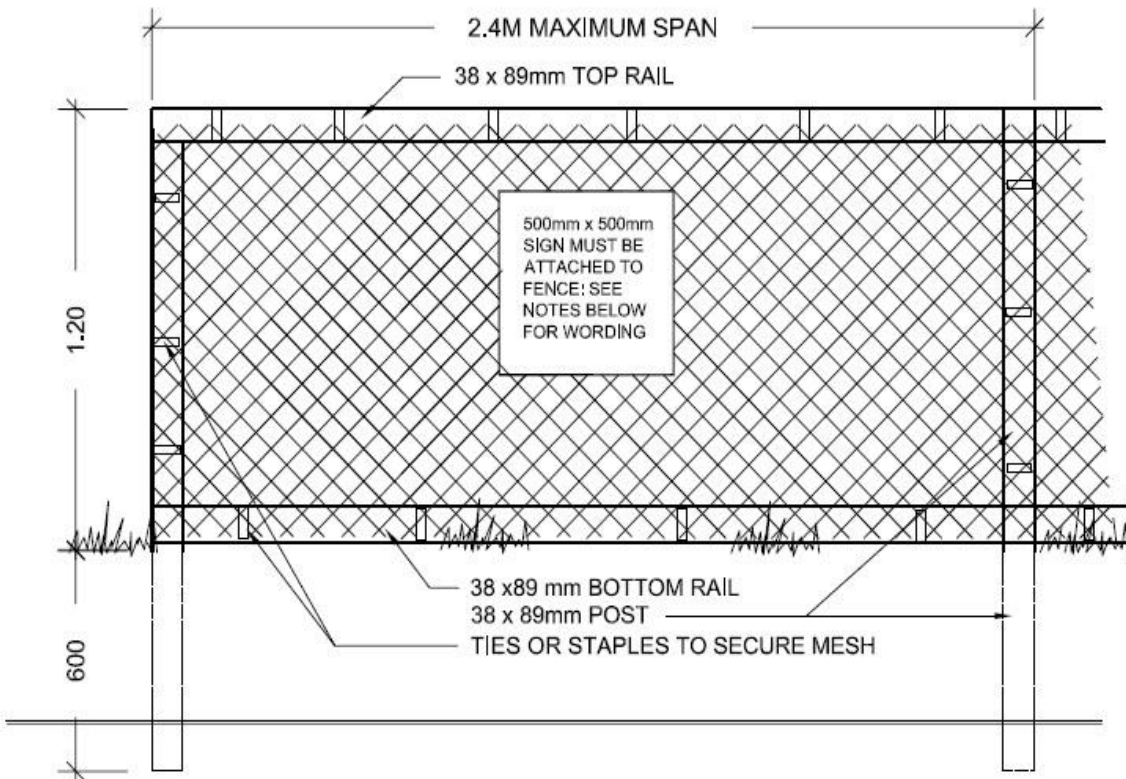
If the protected root zone of any tree is within an existing building, asphalt or accessory building, an independent Certified Arborist **must** be on-site during demolition. The barrier then must be constructed at the appropriate distance before the Building Permit will be issued.

What do I do if the tree is a shared tree or neighbours tree?

Barriers for shared trees and trees on adjacent property **must** be installed to the property line.

Where shared trees and trees on adjacent property may require removal, written authorization from the neighbours must be obtained before applying for a tree cutting permit.





Tree Protection Fencing Specifications:

1. The fence will be constructed using 38mm x 89mm (2" x 4") wood frame: Top, Bottom and Posts.
2. Use orange snow fencing mesh and secure to the wood frame with "zip" ties or galvanized staples.
3. Attach a 500mm x 500mm sign with the following wording: **WARNING – HABITAT PROTECTION AREA**. This sign must be affixed on every fence face or at least every 10 linear metres.
4. In rocky areas, metal posts (t-bar or rebar) drilled into rock will be accepted.



Acceptable Replacement Trees and Planting Requirements

Acceptable Replacement Trees

Preference will be given to replace protected tree species – Garry Oak, Pacific Yew, Pacific Dogwood, Arbutus, Grand Fir, Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar and Big Leaf Maple – with the same native species as permitted for removal.

The Arboriculture Inspector may dictate which species of tree is required as the replacement tree. This will be based on sound arboricultural practices and the extent that the lot will accommodate such species. The principle of “Right Tree – Right Place” will be utilized to determine a suitable replacement tree species.

Tree species included in the Saanich Preferred Tree List may be accepted as replacement trees as long as they are:

- 4cm caliper if a deciduous tree
- 3 metres tall if a coniferous tree

The following will **NOT** be accepted:

- Hedge species such as the Smaragd cedar or equivalent
- Weeping variety such as a weeping cherry or equivalent
- Shrub species such as a juniper or a laurel bush
- Palm trees
- “Dwarf” variety of any tree species

All other trees may be acceptable as replacement trees.

If you have any doubt regarding a particular tree species or would like to confirm a tree is acceptable before you purchase please contact Saanich Parks (250-475-5522 or parks@saanich.ca).

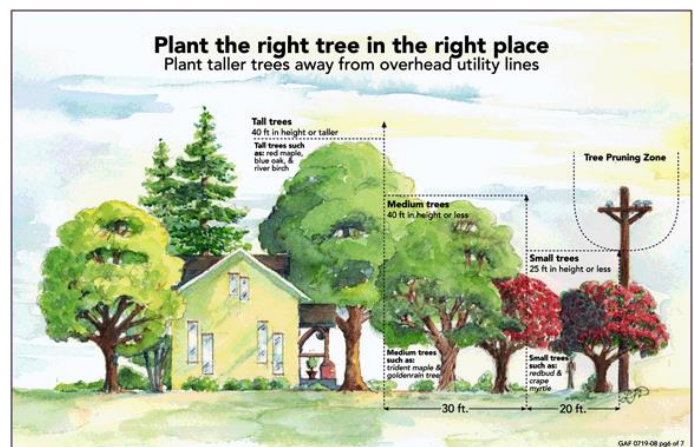
All plant material and planting techniques must comply with the latest edition of the BCSLA/BCLNA “Landscape Standard” as this will effect refund of security deposits.

When the tree(s) has/have been planted as per the requirements set out in your tree cutting permit, contact Saanich Parks for a first inspection.

Upon review, the first 50% refundable security deposit will then be released.

The balance of the security will be refunded after one (1) year of the tree(s) growing well in the ground.

Please contact Saanich Parks for the second inspection.



Planting Requirements

The planting requirements are based on the most recent recommended practices in the British Columbia Landscape Standards. When considering tree selection and planting, it is recommended you seek advice of a reputable landscape professional.

- Ensure that the planting location trees will enable the trees to develop their natural form and ultimate size without creating a negative impact on the tree, its surroundings or any overhead or underground utilities.
- Soil composition should be approximately 20% silt and clay combined, 70% sand and 10% decomposed organic matter. Soil testing kits are available through local nurseries. Private laboratories will also test soil samples.
- Soil pH should be between 4.5 and 6.5
- Set the root ball at the same level as it was growing in the nursery or tree farm. Where there is poor drainage, the tree should be planted 2.5cm to 5cm higher than the surrounding ground. **Under no circumstances should the top of the root ball be buried.**
- All ball and burlap root ball strings must be severed before the final replacement tree inspection.
- Soil should be compacted with water using a sprinkler or hose. Heavy foot traffic around the planting area should be avoided.
- The root ball is should be uniformly watered one day prior to planting.
- Water the newly planted tree once a week, soaking the area thoroughly.
- A 5cm to 7.5cm layer of mulch (bark, peat, mushroom manure, leaf mould, etc.) may be applied to the planting area, but must be kept 15cm away from the tree trunk. Cedar mulch is not acceptable.
- A tree should only be staked if it is unable to stand on its own. When staking:
 - Place the stake on the windward side of the tree
 - Do not drive the stake through the root ball.
 - Tie the tree to the stake with arbor-tie or equivalent, allowing for natural movement of the trunk.
 - The stake should be fastened to the tree with a figure-eight loop tie of a soft fabric material.
 - Remove the stake after one year or when the tree is established.



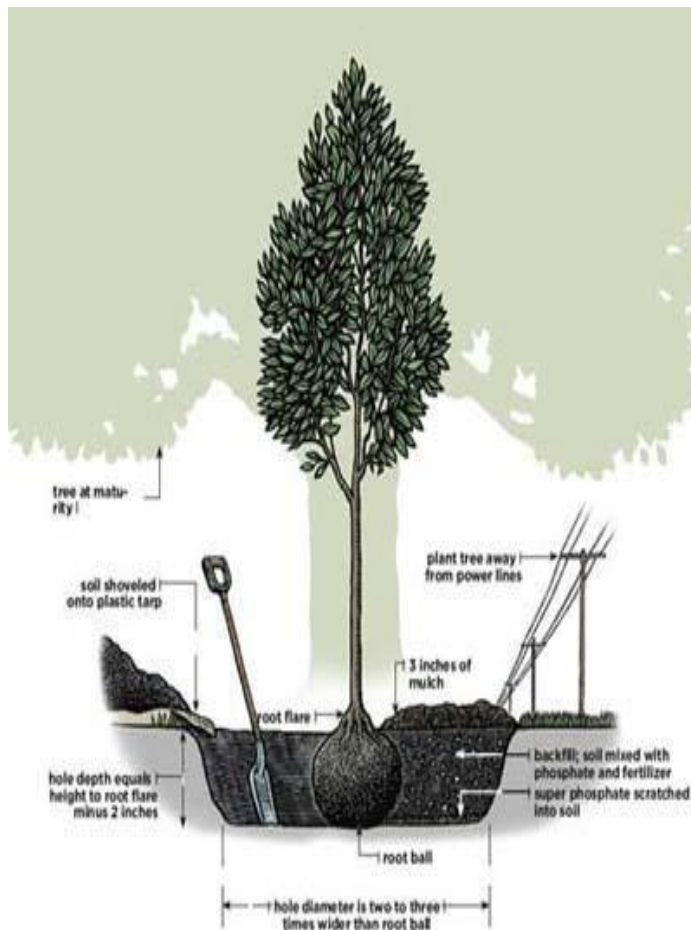
Location and Size

Small growing trees (8m max mature height) are not to be planted within 3m of foundations, fences or outbuildings and medium and large growing trees (more than 8m mature height) are not to be planted closer than 4m from building foundations. This allows for the growth of the tree over its life and prevents problems in the future that may cause the tree's removal.

Replacement trees must also be planted 1m away from all property lines, 3m away from another tree and not planted in hedge like formation.

Trees with mature heights of more than 5m are not to be planted under BC Hydro lines or within 3m of BC Hydro lines.

Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, Grand Fir, Cedrus deodora, Sequoia or any large evergreen will not be acceptable species for planting in small yard areas.



Tree Watering and Maintenance

To get a good start, a healthy, young tree needs at least 20-25 litres (5 gallons) of water, twice per week starting May through to the end of September. Make sure the water flows deep into the root zone.

A regular maintenance program should be adopted for one year after planting to ensure survival and establishment, including pruning, watering and cultivating the planting area.

Do not fertilize until late spring of the second year following planting.

District of Saanich
Parks Division
1040 McKenzie Ave
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parks@saanich.ca
250-475-5522

[TREE PROTECTION BYLAW, 2014](#) [No. 9272](#)

The bylaw is available in its entirety on our website at saanich.ca

