

## Neighborhood Tree Conflicts:

Trees often contribute to neighborhood conflicts, especially if they are planted close to property lines or are blocking views or sunlight. Some neighborhood problems can be avoided by planting trees away from property lines. East Bay Community Mediation can provide assistance if there are neighborhood conflicts concerning trees. Tel: 548-2377 or e-mail [info@ebcm.org](mailto:info@ebcm.org) or on the web at [www.ebcm.org](http://www.ebcm.org)

## Sudden Oak Death Disease:

The Sudden Oak Death (SOD) fungus, *Phytophthora ramorum*, has been found in many Northern California counties, including Alameda County. The list of tree species susceptible to this disease is constantly growing and at the present time, research is being conducted on prevention and control measures. The best source of information concerning all aspects of Sudden Oak Death is on the Sudden Oak Death web site at [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org)

## Urban Forestry Contacts and Web Sites:

### City of Berkeley Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department – Parks Division

- Tree Ordinances
  - Fire Fuel Chipper Program
  - Street tree planting, maintenance and removal
- [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us)  
Tel: 644-6566  
E-mail: [trees@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:trees@ci.berkeley.ca.us)

### City of Berkeley Public Works Department – Engineering

- Sidewalk and curb damage caused by trees
- [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us)  
Tel: 981-6400

### City of Berkeley Fire Department – Fire Prevention

[www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us)  
Tel: 981-5585

### East Bay Community Mediation

[www.ebcm.org](http://www.ebcm.org)  
Tel: 548-2377  
E-mail [info@ebcm.org](mailto:info@ebcm.org)

### Nolo Press Books

- Neighbor Law: Fences, Trees, Boundaries & Noise
- [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com)

### International Society of Arboriculture

- Tree Care Information Brochures
- [www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com)

### California Native Plant Society

- Information on selection and care of native vegetation
- [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

### Sunset Magazine

- Wide range of tree related information and publications
- [www.sunset.com](http://www.sunset.com)

### Pacific Gas & Electric

- Selection of tree species for planting near utility lines
- [www.safetree.com](http://www.safetree.com)

### Sudden Oak Death

- Up to date information on sudden oak death
- [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org)

### Urban Tree Foundation

- Selection, Planting and Pruning of Trees
- [www.urbantree.org](http://www.urbantree.org)

## A Guide To

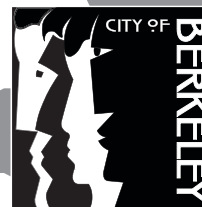
# HEALTHY AND SAFE TREES FOR BERKELEY

Street trees, the trees in your yard and trees in our parks, make up the City of Berkeley's urban forest. Trees are one of our City's major physical features. Berkeley, like the entire East Bay region, was originally open grassland with intermittent stands of oak, buckeye and bay laurels. Over the past 150 years, the open grasslands have disappeared and City dwellers have planted over 250 species of trees. Trees contribute to our City's livability and beauty, but they also cause considerable damage to sidewalks, buildings, power lines, and cause allergies and litter.

The benefit of trees in an urban area are numerous. Trees control erosion, lessen storm water runoff, dampen wind and sound, help cool our homes, provide food and shelter for wildlife, add beauty, and convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. Trees can also be liabilities by contributing to an increase in fire danger, hazards during windstorms, barriers to sunlight and views, and interference with buildings, foundations and utilities, above and below ground. The City of Berkeley spends a quarter of a million dollars each year repairing sidewalks due to tree root damage.

The key to a healthy urban forest begins with the proper selection of the right tree species and an appropriate planting location.

This guide offers suggestions in tree selection, planting locations and tree care, plus a summary of Berkeley ordinances relating to trees.



PARKS RECREATION & WATERFRONT  
Parks Division Office  
1326 Allston Way  
Berkeley, Ca. 94704

## City Ordinances Relating to Public and Private Trees:

Trees growing in the parkways (the space between the curb and sidewalk), center medians, along steps and walkways, in triangles and in City Parks are public trees. It is unlawful for anyone to plant, prune or remove any tree within these areas without a permit issued by the City. Private trees are all trees on private property.

The following are Berkeley Municipal Code ordinances related to public and private trees. The full text can be found on the City of Berkeley's web site at: [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us)

**Chapter 12.44 "Trees and Shrubs"** This ordinance lists regulations relating to the planting, pruning and removal of street and park trees in the City.

**Ordinance No 6462-N.S. "Coast Live Oak Moratorium"** This ordinance restricts the removal of Coast Live Oak trees, on both public and private lands, over 18 inches in circumference, without a permit from the City.

**Chapter 12.45 "Solar Access and Views"** This ordinance establishes a procedure for the resolution of disputes between private property owners relating to loss of sunlight or views due to trees.

Note: This ordinance only applies to private trees. If public trees block views or sunlight, property owners may contact the Parks Division office to schedule an inspection. If pruning or removal is permissible, the City will issue a pruning or removal permit.

## City of Berkeley's Urban Forestry Program:

The City's Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department maintains about 35,000 street trees and 5,000 park trees. The Department plants around 800 trees and removes 600 dead, dying or hazardous trees each year.

**Street Tree Planting:** Anyone can apply to have a street tree planted in the parkway in front of their residence or business. Tree Planting Application Forms are available from the Parks Division's Forestry office or off the City's web site. The City will provide and plant the tree. The applicant must water the trees for the first two years after planting. Forestry staff makes an effort to match an appropriate tree species to the width of the parkway in an effort to minimize damage to curbs and sidewalks. Once a species has been selected for planting on a portion of a street, future tree planting will be with the same or compatible species.

**Tree Pruning/Maintenance:** The City is on a five-year pruning cycle. Forestry staff also prune trees with specific problems on an as needed basis. All pruning performed is based on International Society of Arboriculture Pruning Standards. The City does not have jurisdiction over PG&E's line clearing practices. PG&E will prune trees to ensure that tree branches do not interfere with electric power lines.

**Tree Removal:** Trees are removed when they are dead, dying or structurally unsound. Every tree removal is evaluated case-by-case, based upon a standard list of criteria. Adjacent property owners are always notified when each tree is marked for removal and posted with Forestry's phone number, in case there are questions.

## Selecting the Right Tree for the Right Place:

To have the long term benefit of trees with few problems and conflicts requires selecting the right tree species for the right planting location. Choosing the right tree and the right planting location involves the following factors:

**Size and Shape:** Plant a tree in a place that allows the tree to grow to its mature size and shape to fit that location. Prior to selecting a tree species, check carefully in references books and web sites on the mature height and spread. A common mistake is to plant a young tree too close to a house. When mature, the tree will be 20-30 times larger and taller. Bad pruning compounds this mistake. A tree permitted to grow to its natural size and shape adds beauty to the landscape.

**Location:** Large trees growing too close to homes can cause considerable damage to foundations and sidewalks, block sunlight and eventually damage walls and roofs. For example, homeowners have planted Redwood trees in their yards. Twenty years later, that tree is 80 feet tall and will continue growing for another 1,000 years. Before planting, match the tree's mature size to the space available to see if the tree can grow to its mature size without damaging your house and without requiring expensive maintenance or removal.

**Overhead and Underground Utilities:** Plant trees away from overhead utility lines and underground utilities such as electrical, phone, gas, water and sewer lines. Trees planted in the clear prevent damage caused by falling trees and limbs, invasive roots and allow repairs to underground utility lines without damaging nearby trees.

**Insect, Disease and Litter Problems:** Many species of trees, both native and non-native, are susceptible to severe insect and disease problems if planted in the wrong environment. All reference books and web sites will list the tree types and their problems, as well as diseases and insects' to which they are susceptible.

**Allergens:** Pollen from some tree species is very allergenic and can have a serious effect on the overall air quality of your yard or garden. Selecting species that are less allergenic will make your surroundings much more enjoyable.

**Native Species:** Native species are generally more adaptive to our environment than non-native species. Native trees also require less watering and if grown in their natural setting, they will often be less susceptible to insect, disease and environmental problems. Not all trees native to California will grow well in the Berkeley area and not all landscapes are suitable for native trees. An excellent source of information on native plants is the California Native Plant society at [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

**Fire Safe Landscape:** A fire safe landscape is the key to protecting your home against a spreading fire. Trees and other vegetation growing close to a building can contribute to the spread of fire, especially in the high fire danger areas of the Berkeley hills. Proper plant selection, appropriate planting locations and the right maintenance, can contribute to fire safety and a beautiful landscape. For information call the City of Berkeley Fire Department – Fire Prevention at 981-5585 or visit the website at [www.firesafecouncil.org/education/landscaping](http://www.firesafecouncil.org/education/landscaping)