

## **Princeton Trees Key Facts You Should Know**

Princeton, a Tree City U.S.A. community, recognizes the unique and irreplaceable value of trees. Trees, on both private and public property, provide significant aesthetic, ecological, economic, health, and environmental benefits, all of which enhance Princeton's natural character and heritage. Therefore, Princeton has established rules and regulations to protect and preserve its urban forest (Chapter 22 of the Princeton Code constitutes the **Princeton Trees and Shrubs Ordinance**).

### **TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY**

#### ***Removal of Trees***

Property owners must apply for a permit to remove or otherwise destroy a tree on private property that falls into one of the four categories below. (To "destroy" a tree means to kill it or to damage it irreparably, leading to its inability to thrive.) Replacement requirements also apply.

A permit is needed if a tree:

1. Is deciduous and has a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) of 8 inches or more. (DBH means the diameter of the trunk of a tree measured at a point 4 ½ feet above ground level.)
2. Is an ornamental tree or evergreen tree with a height of 10 feet or more. (An ornamental tree is a tree that can be single- or multi-stemmed, and

that grows to a maximum height of 25 feet. An evergreen tree is a tree with foliage that remains green and functional throughout the year.)

3. Has a canopy that extends over a public right-of-way.

4. Is a specimen or significant tree. (Specimen tree means a tree equal to at least 80% percent of the size listed on the "Champion Big Tree Register" of the New Jersey Community Forestry Management Plan. Significant tree means a tree so designated because of its particular specimen, quality, historical significance, location, or size.)

Pruning or removal of a tree that poses imminent danger to life or property (or where removal is in response to an emergency) does not require a permit. This exception applies to pruning or removal only to the extent necessary to abate the imminent danger or emergency. Notification of such removal to the enforcement officer (the Princeton arborist) is required. Special provisions apply to removal of ***Fraxinus spp.*** (Ash) trees. For additional information, including a list of all exceptions, see Ordinance § 22.12.

#### ***How to File for a Removal Permit for Trees on Private Property***

The permit application is available on the Shade Tree Commission website [www.princetonshadetree.org](http://www.princetonshadetree.org) or by visiting the Public Works office in Monument Hall during normal business hours. Consult the application and the

Ordinance for full details on what is required. For example, you must include with your application a plan for replacing the tree(s) you want to remove. You must mail or hand deliver a copy of your application to your adjacent neighbors. The tree(s) proposed for removal must be marked with a material, such as a ribbon or string, wrapped around the trunk.

The enforcement officer, a certified arborist and tree expert, has 20 business days to grant or deny the application in whole or in part. Decisions are based on criteria detailed in the Ordinance.

Any person or company hired to prune, remove, and/or treat trees must be registered with the municipality.

#### ***Violations and Penalties***

Any person who, without a permit, removes or destroys a tree on private property that falls into one of the four categories detailed above is subject to an administrative service fee in addition to replacement requirements and/or payment of a tree replacement fee to the municipality.

### **PUBLIC TREES**

Trees and shrubs within or extending onto public streets, highways, right-of-ways, and other public property, including parks, are considered public trees. They are protected and maintained by the municipality and its Shade Tree Commission.

It is a violation to cut, trim, damage, remove or destroy, affix rope and wires to, or hitch or fasten an animal or bicycle or other personal property to any tree or shrub under the municipality's jurisdiction without prior written approval of the Princeton arborist. For a complete listing of prohibited actions, see Ordinance § 22-6.

### ***The "Adopt an Ash Tree" Program***

To help preserve some of Princeton's Ash trees from attack by the Emerald Ash Borer, Princeton has established the **Adopt an Ash Tree** program to allow residents to treat selected public trees. See the Shade Tree Commission website for information about the program.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT TREES?**

If you have any questions about trees – how to protect and maintain your trees; what to do if trees appear to be damaged, dying, or dangerous; what type of trees will thrive if planted in your yard – we invite you to visit the Princeton Shade Tree Commission website, [www.princetonshadetree.org](http://www.princetonshadetree.org). To report a damaged or dying public tree in Princeton, call the Princeton arborist at (609) 497-7639 or email [LKonopka@princetonnj.gov](mailto:LKonopka@princetonnj.gov). For a tree emergency – for example, a downed tree near a power line – do not go near it. Call 911 to notify the police or call PSE&G (1-800-436-7734).

**Princeton Trees and Shrubs Ordinance** is available through the Shade Tree Commission website [www.princetonshadetree.org](http://www.princetonshadetree.org).

This brochure reflects Ordinance amendments through October 2016.

Princeton Arborist  
(609) 497-7639  
[LKonopka@princetonnj.gov](mailto:LKonopka@princetonnj.gov)

Princeton Shade Tree Commission  
[www.princetonshadetree.org](http://www.princetonshadetree.org)



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