



# OAK TREES

## CITY OF MONROVIA - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There are several types of oak trees commonly found in Monrovia. By far, the most common is the *Quercus Agrifolia* or Coast Live Oak. With their broad, stately limbs often reaching spans of more than 40', these trees have become a symbol for Monrovia. The leaves are glossy green, 1"-3" long but cupped/curled under at the edges. In addition, you can find the Valley Oak, Engelmann Oak, Leather Oak, and Cork Oak, here just to name a few.

### OAK RULES—IN A NUTSHELL (Acorn, that is)

- Minimal Water
- Leave leaf litter
- Use river rock or drought-tolerant plants under the tree
- Do not over prune (if at all)
- Prune—June to September only

For more information [CLICK HERE](#) or call (626) 932-5565



### Preserving Our Oak Trees

In an effort to save our oak trees for future generations, the City of Monrovia adopted an oak tree preservation plan. [Section 17.20.040](#) of the Monrovia Municipal Code identifies which trees are subject to the ordinance and when a permit for removal or trimming is required.

#### Stay away from the zone

Although they look big and strong, oak trees can be easily damaged and are sensitive to disturbances that happen to the tree or in the surrounding environment. The protection zone for oak trees includes the areas most critical to the health and survival of the tree. This includes the entire canopy, 5' beyond the drip line, or at least 15' on either side of the main trunk of the root system, whichever is greater.

If paving materials must be used within the protected area of the oak tree, suggested materials include brick paving with sand joints, pavers, or river rock

#### An Oak is like a cactus

DO NOT OVER WATER! Improper watering is often overlooked as the cause of tree death because it can take years for the damage to show. Oak trees are naturally drought tolerant and have adapted to southern California's weather pattern. Except for very young trees, generally, natural rainfall is the only water that is needed. The rare exception is during the winter if we are having prolonged drought conditions over a period of years. Then a deep watering is advisable.

#### Do not over prune

Oak trees require very little pruning and should only be done to remove deadwood. Cuts on green (live) wood could cause scars which can make it more susceptible to damaging organisms or disease. If pruning needs to be done it should be done during its dormant period (June through September). Pruning should be left to the experts— a certified arborist or other professional familiar with oak trees.

#### To feed or not to feed

Leaf "litter" from the tree provides the best mulch for the tree. Crushed walnut shells or wood chips can be used, but the leaves that drop naturally are the best source of nutrients. Avoid commercial mulch which sometimes contains Oak Root Fungus. Additionally, redwood chips often contain chemicals that should not come in contact with the oak tree and roots. River rock can also be placed around the base as a decorative feature. The greatest goal is to keep the trunk and area under the drip line dry. The use of plants that require regular watering such as grass and ferns under an oak tree is not advisable. Any land-scaping around the tree should be drought-tolerant, like the oak itself.

# OAKS, THE LAW, AND YOU

## Where Have All the Oak Trees Gone?

Monrovia is lucky to have oak trees dotting the landscape throughout town. These grand trees, many several generations old, are another link to our past. Unfortunately, oak trees in residential settings often suffer damage and death due to preventable measures. The most common culprit is water. Too much, that is. With rainy seasons bringing as little as 6 inches of rain, Monrovia's climate is basically desert. Our oak trees have become very adept at living in these conditions and overwatering (especially during the summer) can bring on all sorts of problems and eventually lead to death. Disturbance to the root system is another unfortunate fate of the oak.

## Save the Oaks—you'll be happy you did!

The City of Monrovia recognizes the value of oak trees—both as a historic and aesthetic element of our City. It's been proven that a mature oak can add value to your property. So, enjoy your oak tree. Make it the focal point of your overall landscape plan.

The Monrovia Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance provides guidelines for preservation, and yes, sometimes mandates their preservation.

## Are all Oak trees protected?

For the most part—Yes! The only exception to the ordinance is an oak tree on a single-family property that is not in the front yard or a street-facing side yard of a corner lot.

Prior to any work done on an oak tree, check with the City's Planning Division. Describe your situation to the Staff to determine if an Oak Tree Preservation Permit is required. If it is, then an application must be filled out which will be reviewed at a public meeting by the Development Review Committee (DRC).

## Do I need a permit?

For all trees covered by the Ordinance, an Oak Tree Preservation Permit is required when:

- An oak tree is to be removed; or
- An oak tree is to be pruned so that more than one-third of the crown, existing foliage, or root system of the tree is removed; or
- If irrigation is to be installed or grading (cutting/or filling) is to take place within the drip line of an oak tree. (The canopy drip line is roughly the same as the shadow it casts at noon).

## So I Need a Permit, now what?

If it's determined that a permit is required, the following items are required to apply:

- A site plan showing where the oak tree(s) is located.
- Report from a certified arborist de-scribing the condition of the tree with respect to disease, structural stability, and a determination of why the tree should be trimmed or removed.

The DRC will review the application and will make a determination based on the criteria outlined in the City's Ordinance. You are encouraged to attend the meeting so that you can explain the reason for your request.

Penalty. Violations of the City's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance by a single-family homeowner shall be punishable as an infraction. Persons with violations on lots developed with other than single-family homes shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor. Violators may also be required to replace the tree(s) with a tree of comparable size, type, and conditions determined by the DRC.

CITY OF MONROVIA - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
415 SOUTH IVY AVENUE  
(626) 932-5565

