

F.A.Q.

1. **Why do leaves change color in the fall?**

Leaves contain three types of natural substances called pigments, which determine leaf color both during the growing season and in the fall. Chlorophyll is the dominant pigment in most leaves, and it gives them their green color in spring and summer. As autumn approaches and the nights get longer, chlorophyll disappears revealing the pigments called carotenoids, which give some leaves their yellow, orange, and brown fall colors.

In some species, such as the red and sugar maples, bright sunny days and lower evening temperatures combine to cause an excess of sugars produced in the leaves, which then create a red pigment called anthocyanin turning these leaves striking shades of red and purple.

2. **Can I prune the branches from my neighbor's tree that overhang on my property?**

Three main points to remember when dealing with trees on adjacent private property are that:

- You cannot trespass onto your neighbor's property.
- You cannot damage your neighbor's property (in this case a tree).
- You have the right to maintain your property in a safe condition.

It is, therefore, best for property owners to come to an agreement between themselves with respect to trees overhanging property lines. If you are unable to reach an agreement with your neighbor and want to determine your legal rights, you should contact a lawyer.

The act of pruning trees on neighboring private property affects private property rights and is a civil issue between private property owners. The City has no jurisdiction with respect to such issues.

Pruning of the tree is permitted provided the pruning is in accordance with good arboricultural standards. A qualified tree expert should always be retained to carry out tree pruning.

3. **Will the City remove bees, wasp or hornet nests in the tree in front of my house?**

It is a policy of the City Akron, Parks Maintenance Division to leave wasp nests in trees where possible given the benefits of many wasp species as a natural control agent for other insect pests. If staff safety is not jeopardized, City of Akron Parks Maintenance Division will spray the nests of bees, wasps, and hornets in trees which are situated on or overhang City property (road allowance and parkland) if the nest is deemed to be a safety concern to the public. Nests, which are in a tree and located more than 15 feet above ground level, are typically not treated. If the nests are located close enough to the ground and threaten public safety, the Parks Maintenance Division will inspect the site and decide on appropriate further action.

This policy applies only to bee, wasp and hornet's nests in trees and does not include nests found in hedges, utility boxes, on light standards or in ground.

4. **There is a tree in front of my house that I don't want. Can I get it removed?**

Maintenance, protection, preservation, and removal of all trees located on any City street shall be under supervision of the Parks Maintenance Division.

- No person shall remove, cut down, destroy or injure any tree or part of a tree located on a City street.
- The Parks Maintenance Division will inspect the tree to determine if it is a candidate for routine removal.
- If the tree qualifies for removal due to its poor health or unsafe condition, we will schedule the tree for removal, and a new tree will be scheduled for planting.

5. How long do I have to wait for the City to prune the tree in front of my house?

After your request for tree work is received and Parks Maintenance Division Inspector inspects the tree and determines what work is necessary, the work order will typically be completed within 8 weeks.

6. Can I prune a City owned tree?

Only the City of Akron Parks Maintenance Division staff, and under certain circumstances, authorized certified private arborists can perform maintenance on City owned trees.

7. Why are tree roots important to protect?

Most people know that tree roots stabilize a tree. However, that is only part of their job. Most people don't realize that roots absorb oxygen out of the soil. Tree roots absorb air, water, and nutrients such as nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus from the soil then convey these elements to the rest of the tree. All of these are essential for the trees growth and overall health. Tree roots also store starches that are produced during the growing season. If a tree's roots are damaged, then the tree will become stressed, its health will decline, and it will die.

Tree roots also stabilize the tree in a vertical position, especially those roots that grow horizontally from the base of the trunk or stem, known as the root flare.

8. Is it okay to prune trees in the winter?

Yes, trees can be pruned any season including winter. Some tree species, such as birches or maples, exude more sap when pruned in the spring, and such large quantities of sap can be unsightly, but not detrimental to the tree.

9. Can I get firewood or wood chips from the City?

The wood from City trees is ground up into mulch and used in City parks and community centers.

10. There are tree roots in my sewer line. Can I get the tree removed?

- Tree roots do not cause drains or sewer pipes to break, but they will invade and clog drains that have pre-existing cracks and resultant leakage.
- Drains are usually six to eight feet below ground level, while tree roots grow almost exclusively in the upper two feet of soil because they not only need nutrients, but also oxygen to survive. When drains leak, they provide oxygen and nutrient rich water deep in the soil, which allow tree roots to grow deep into the soil and get into the already cracked drain pipe.
- It is the policy of City Akron Parks Maintenance Division to not approve the removal of trees due to drain and/or sewer blockages.
- Replacement of old drains or weeping tiles with new PVC piping, continuous between the house and sewer, eliminates future blockages by tree roots.

11. If my tree has been removed, am I required to have a replacement tree?

- See Comprehensive Street Tree Policy below.



COMPREHENSIVE STREET TREE POLICY

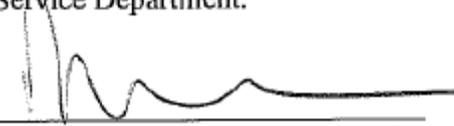
The City of Akron views trees as valuable “Urban Ecosystem” amenities, evidenced by the 1996 Street Tree Inventory, which valued Akron’s Street Trees at 39 million dollars. **Adjusted for inflation (as of Jan. 1, 2008) that figure is \$53,316,900 in current value.** Therefore, whenever practical, considering the general health, safety and welfare of our citizenry, as well as the many benefits of trees:

- (1) Existing trees should be preserved where public safety regarding the above ground structure of the tree is not an issue. (Sidewalk issues will be addressed under the sidewalk replacement program)
- (2) Removed trees should be replaced with appropriately chosen species, sized to not conflict with overhead utilities.
- (3) Empty street lawn planting sites (15,000 as of the 1996 street tree inventory) along any public right of way are publicly owned and should be planted with professionally selected varieties of trees. This action will collectively contribute to improve canopy density, reduce crime, contribute to energy cost savings, improve air quality by providing oxygenation and particulate reduction, ameliorate noise pollution, reduce soil erosion, promote aesthetic beauty for each neighborhood, provide wildlife habitat and other benefits too lengthy to enumerate in this format.

The above coincides with the Mayor’s mandated “GreenPrint Initiative” as directed by the Director of Public Service or his designee. The City Arborist and Horticulturist shall apply all applicable specifications from the most recent edition of the City of Akron Department of Public Service, Akron Engineering Bureau Construction and Material Specifications, as well as other supporting tree planting criteria.

This policy change supersedes all tree planting policies issued or allowed prior to January 1, 2008. Exceptions may be granted for medically documented cases where in home assistance is unavailable, at the discretion of the Service Department.

Approved: 
Donald L. Plusquellic, Mayor
January 1, 2008

Approved: 
Richard A. Merolla, Director of Public Service
January 1, 2008

12. The tree in front of my house has wires growing in it. Will the City clear the lines?

Pole to Pole line clearance is done by the utility companies; they are trimming under a federal mandate after the blackout in 2003. This type of trimming gives no regard to aesthetics and actually will shorten the life of the tree. However, the City will clear the line that goes from the pole to the house, “House Drops,” if the tree limbs that are interfering with the line are from the lawn strip tree.