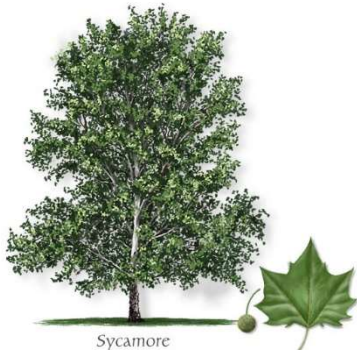


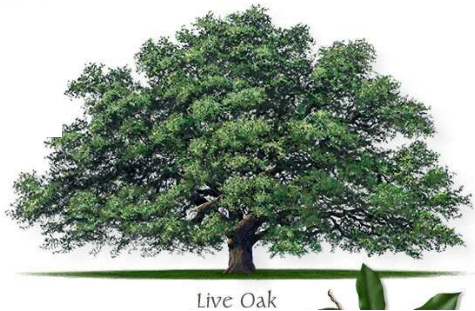


CITY OF
ATASCADERO

NATIVE TREE HANDBOOK



Sycamore



Live Oak

August 2018

Statement of Purpose

The City of Atascadero Native Tree Handbook provides an overview of city regulations regarding the preservation, maintenance, and removal of native trees. Residents and professionals are encouraged to consult this handbook and City staff prior to embarking on projects that may directly or indirectly impact trees on or near their property.

Disclaimer

These policies are subject to change over time. A consultation with City staff is encouraged before undertaking any new project to determine whether or not the proposed work will impact a protected native tree as well as to identify any fees or mitigation required by the Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance. The complete ordinance can be found at www.atascadero.org.

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Overview

The City of Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance and the associated Native Tree Guidelines were adopted in 1988 to help enforce the preservation, maintenance, and regeneration of Atascadero's native trees and woodlands.

What are Native Trees and Why Protect Them?

Native trees are those that have historically grown and evolved to survive in our region without human interference. Native trees are often better adapted to local climates and soils which allow them to support local ecosystems and provide valuable environmental services. In Atascadero, the Municipal Code recognizes and protects several species of deciduous and evergreen native trees and large shrubs (See page 11).



Photo of City Hall taken in the early 1900s

Native trees greatly contribute to the rural character of the City. As the City of Atascadero continues to grow, urban projects begin to encroach on the native plant species that exist on developable land. Construction and development can alter native habitat by damaging root systems, soils, drainage, and natural canopy growth. The city adopted the Native Tree Ordinance and Native Tree Guidelines in an effort to balance growth with the protection of the natural environment within the urban setting.



TREE CITY USA®

Tree City USA

Atascadero is proud to be a Tree City USA member since 1989. Tree City USA is an Arbor Day Foundation program that works to recognize cities across the United States that preserve their urban tree canopy and work to improve care of vital city trees.

Atascadero is proud to put care and consideration into our native and nonnative trees to preserve our beautiful City!

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if the native tree ordinance affects my project or property?

If there is a native tree or heritage tree on or near a site you are planning to develop, or if your property is within a Commercial or Multi-Family Residential zone, then the Native Tree Ordinance will require you to maintain and preserve that tree unless a tree removal permit is approved by the City.

What is a tree protection plan?

A tree protection plan is a set of measures put in place to protect existing trees during the construction process. If your project will have impacts within 20 feet of the dripline of an existing native tree, then you will need to submit an arborist approved tree protection plan. See pages 7 - 8 for more information.

When do I need a tree removal permit?

If you are planning to remove a native tree or prune more than 25% of the live canopy, then you need a tree removal permit. Some exemptions may apply. See pages 9 – 10 for more information.

Are there any exceptions to the permit regulation?

Yes. The following are the most common exemptions: Emergencies where the tree poses an imminent threat to human life or real property (staff must be notified within 12 hours); licensed nurseries and tree farms; and most single family residences in single family zoning districts where there is no planned construction. See pages 5 for more information.

What is the cost of a Tree Removal Permit?

There is a base permit fee which goes towards application and processing fees. This fee is updated annually so you should check with the City for the current fee. Mitigation fees may also be required if trees are removed. See page 10 for more information.

How can I identify a native tree?

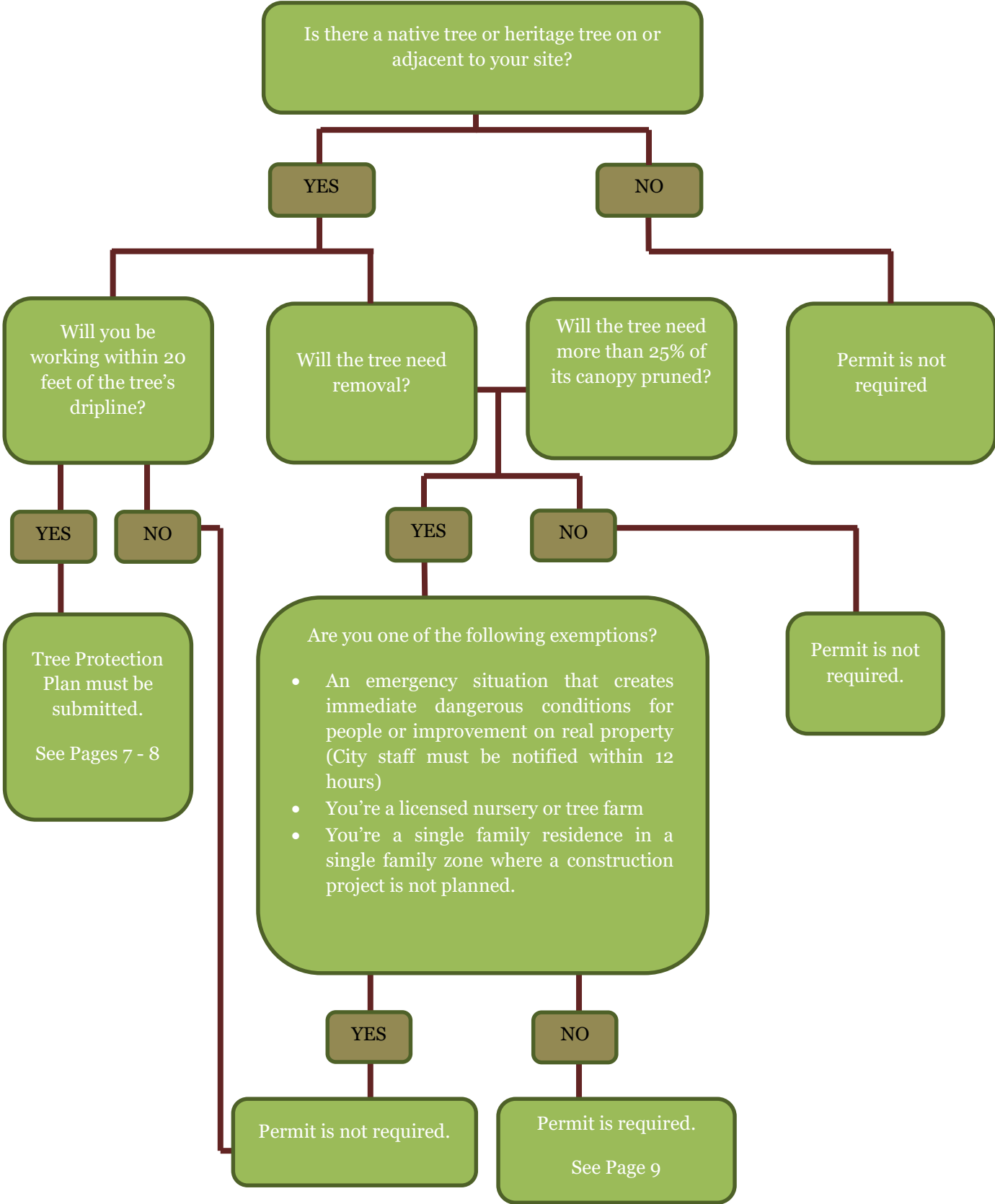
A certified arborist is required to identify native trees for the purposes of tree removal or protection. However, this handbook provides descriptions and images that can help residents identify some native trees. See Appendix A for more information.

Where can I find an arborist?

Arborists certified by the International Society of Arboriculture can be found using the following website:

<https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist>

Native Tree Ordinance Requirement Flow Chart



Native Tree Basics

Through the Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance, the City has set standards for the preservation and replacement of the city’s native trees. This includes the proper protocol for tree management, tree protection plans, and tree removals. The City often requires consultation with a certified arborist to prepare a written report before moving forward with any project. Consultation with city staff is encouraged prior to any project to avoid damages to any trees and possible penalty fees.

Atascadero Native Trees

The City of Atascadero recognizes and protects twelve native tree species under its Native Tree Ordinance. Five of these trees are considered evergreen species meaning that under the proper conditions they will have leaves throughout the entire year. The other seven are deciduous meaning that they lose their leaves seasonally. Seven of the twelve trees protected are oaks.

Regulations provided by the City’s Native Tree Ordinance protect these trees from any construction or maintenance activities that can damage or kill them. These regulations include standards for tree protection and trimming as well as replacement for trees that must be removed or are damaged during a project. The table below provides a list of the recognized native trees in the City of Atascadero. Appendix A provides listed images, and descriptions are included to facilitate identification; however, land owners are encouraged to consult with city staff or an arborist to correctly identify a tree.

Certified Arborist

A certified arborist is one who has passed the International Society of Arboriculture’s certification examination. The city requires a current certification of any arborist that is reporting on behalf of a project.



City of Atascadero Native Tree List		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Type
California Sycamore	<i>Platanus racemosa</i> Nutt.	Deciduous
Blue Oak/ Desert Oak Hybrid	<i>Quercus alvordiana</i> Nee.	Deciduous
Leather Oak	<i>Quercus durata</i> Jeps.	Deciduous
Blue Oak	<i>Quercus douglasii</i> H&A	Deciduous
Valley Oak	<i>Quercus lobata</i> Nee	Deciduous
Desert Oak	<i>Quercus turbinella</i>	Deciduous
Madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i> Pursh.	Evergreen
Toyon, California Holly	<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i> Lindl.	Evergreen
California Black Walnut	<i>Juglans hindsii</i> Jeps.	Deciduous
Coast Live Oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i> Eastw.	Evergreen
Scrub Oak	<i>Quercus dumosa</i> Jeps.	Evergreen
California Bay Laurel	<i>Umbellularia californica</i> Butt.	Evergreen

Native Trees and Development

Under the Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance, the expectation is that all new projects within the city will try to preserve native trees to the greatest extent feasible. Depending on the project scope, residents and professionals may be expected to plant new trees, submit tree protection plans, mitigate potential impacts to existing trees, or plan for tree removal if necessary.

Urban forest regeneration

For all new residential development, whether trees are removed or not, the City requires the planting of native trees. One (1) five-gallon tree is required for each residence in a single-family or medium density residential zone; one (1) native tree for every five (5) units in a multi-family development. Mixed-use residential developments in the Downtown Commercial zoning district are exempt from tree replacement requirements.

Tree protection plans

Tree protection plans are required if any construction activity occurs within twenty feet of the dripline of any native tree. Activities include but are not limited to the following: remodeling or new construction, grading, road building, utility trenching, stockpiling of material, large machine access areas, etc. A tree protection plan is included as part of the submittal for a building permit or development plan and must be prepared or approved by the project arborist.

Protection Measures for Native Trees

Generally, if a project is expected to encroach within a tree's dripline, special measures must be taken to protect the health of the tree and its roots. A tree protection fence is required around the dripline of the tree before any construction or earth movements begin. Areas that cannot be fenced at the dripline and where construction encroaches within the dripline requires arborist review. Any trenching that occurs within the dripline must be hand dug, augured or bored, and avoid major roots. All impacted roots greater than 1-inch diameter must be clean cut. Soils under the dripline of any compacted or disturbed area must be returned to their original state using soil aeration methods and chip mulch. Any paving under the dripline should use pervious material.

Page 8 shows an example of what a tree protection plan might look like.

Review and approval

Tree Protection Plans are reviewed and approved by the Community Development Department concurrent with the review of any construction or building permit. If tree protection fencing is required, City staff will inspect the project site prior to the commencement of grading or construction to ensure compliance with the plan. For larger projects such as commercial

Protective Tree Fencing and Chip Mulch

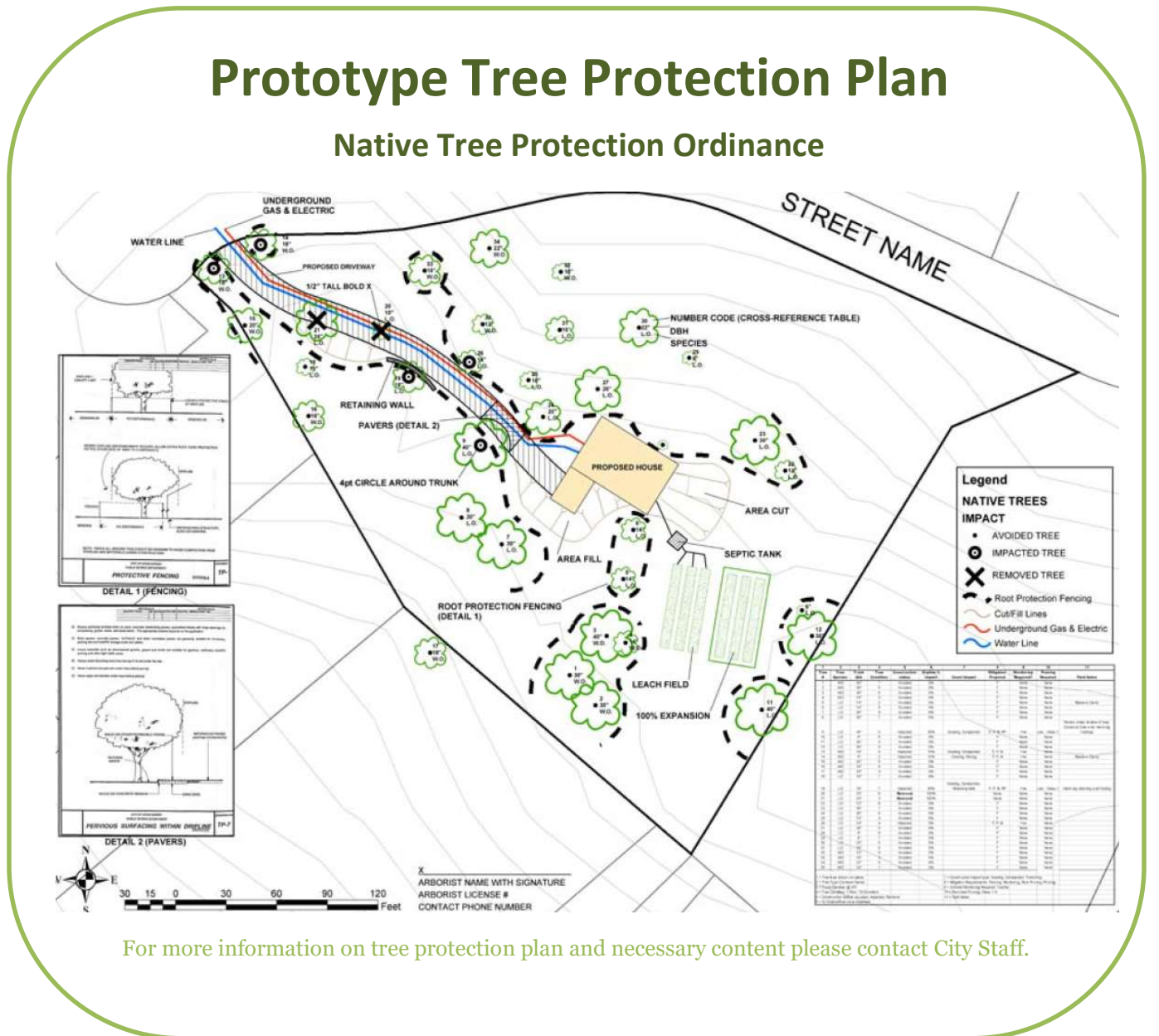


Chain-link, snow, or safety fencing must be a minimum of four feet high and should be staked at the dripline. A four to six-inch layer of chip mulch must be laid within the dripline where fencing can't be placed.

developments and new construction of single-family homes, a pre-construction meeting may be required with the general contractor, city staff, an arborist if necessary, and any needed utility companies.

Tree protection for private and public utilities

Utility companies doing regular maintenance and construction are not required to submit tree protection plans for each individual project but shall meet the tree protection requirements set forth by the city through conditions placed in a revocable encroachment permit that may be issued on a yearly basis.



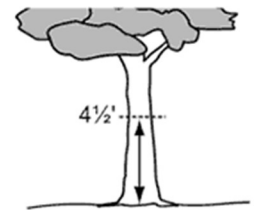
Tree Removal and Permitting

Tree removal is defined by the City as the physical destruction, displacement, or removal of a tree, or portions of a tree caused by poisoning, cutting, burning, relocation for transplanting, bulldozing or other mechanical, chemical, or physical means. A tree removal permit is required for any of the species protected, as listed above, if the project involves any of the following:

1. The project involves removal of a listed deciduous tree with a 2-inch dbh or greater.
2. The project involves removal of a listed evergreen tree with a 4-inch dbh or greater.
3. The project involves pruning of more than twenty-five percent of the live canopy of any listed tree.
4. The project involves work which encroaches into the dripline on a listed tree located within a commercial zone; or multi-family zone; or planned development that specifies adherence to the native tree ordinance.
5. Construction is planned and a building permit is expected to be submitted for a project that involves the actions described in numbers one through four.

DBH

DBH mean diameter at breast height. To measure dbh accurately, do so at specifically four feet six inches (4'6") above natural grade.



A permit application must be filled out and signed by both a certified arborist and property owner. Application fees will be due at the time of permit application. Mitigation fees are required prior to tree removal.

Residents with properties in a Single-Family zoning district do not need a tree removal permit when removing or pruning a tree unless construction is anticipated and/or a permit has been filed with the city (even if the permit is outside the area of the tree).



Premeditated Tree Removal is Illegal!

A common misconception is that residents with single family residences or within the single family zone can remove or prune a native tree before undertaking a project to avoid the permitting process. If city staff finds that a tree has been purposely damaged or removed without proper permitting to accommodate an upcoming project, then the city can require mitigation with higher replacement ratios or fees as a penalty. Contact City staff for more information.

Applying for a permit.

Residents of the City of Atascadero who require a permit based on the criteria listed above can do so by filling out a “Planning Application.” This application can be picked up at the front counter of the Atascadero City Hall or downloaded from the City website at the following link:

<https://www.atascadero.org/files/CD/Planning%20Application.pdf>

Lot posting.

All native trees proposed for removal shall be identified by the applicant for field inspection by using a red ribbon or similar visual identification tool. When a tree removal is sought, city staff will post the lot along the project frontage for a minimum of fifteen calendar days prior to approval of the removal request.

Fees and Mitigation

Fees are due prior to approval/issuance of the tree removal application or construction permit. In addition to permit fees, a mitigation fee is also required. The required mitigation can be fulfilled by either paying into the City’s Tree Replacement Fund or by planting trees, where practicable, on the subject lot. The fee is based on the size of the tree, the zoning district in which it is located, and whether it is deciduous or non-deciduous.

Mitigation can be calculated as outlined below.

Base Payment of \$389 (for application)
in addition to fees below.

Property Zoning	Mitigation per 6” diameter removed*		Single Family Residential Zone	
	Deciduous	Non-Deciduous	Deciduous Native Trees	Other Native Trees:
RSF, RS, LSF	\$100	\$50		<i>Plant two trees for every 6” dbh of tree removed</i>
RMF/Non-Residential/Roads	\$200	\$100		Plant one tree for every 6” dbh of tree removed
			Multi- Family & Commercial/Roads	
			Deciduous Native Trees	Plant four trees for every 6” dbh of tree removed
			Other Native Trees:	Plant two trees for every 6” dbh of tree removed

Tree Surety:

If trees are impacted by construction but are proposed to be saved, the city may require a surety, or bond, for a period of at least one year to ensure impacted trees do not decline from construction impacts.

Dead and Hazardous Trees:

No permit fee is required if a tree is determined to be dead or hazardous by a certified arborist, however mitigation fees still apply.

Heritage Trees

Heritage trees are any native or non-native tree recognized by the City Council for its age, size, location, historical, and/or cultural significance. Any significant tree within the city limits may be proposed as a heritage tree with the property owner's consent. City staff will review each proposed heritage tree and, with the owner's consent, recommend suitable candidates to the City Council for official designation as heritage trees. Heritage trees receive the same protection and are subject to all conditions set forth by the City's Native Tree Ordinance. Proposals for the removal of heritage trees of any size or species must be approved by the City Council.

The City maintains a list of Heritage Trees in Atascadero. Some examples include:


- Large Sycamores along Atascadero Avenue
- Valley Oaks along northern El Camino Real, North of Del Rio
- Valley Oaks in Paloma Park
- Deodar Cedars and Magnolia Trees at Sunken Gardens Park
- Live Oaks on East and West Mall Parkways

Useful Resources

Our native tree guidelines are kept up to date on our website and in the City of Atascadero's Municipal Code. For accurate and up to date information, consult these documents or City Staff before moving forward with any tree removals.

- Visit the City of Atascadero Municipal Code at <http://qcode.us/codes/atascadero/> and head to Title 9 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 11 Native Tree Regulations.

Atascadero Municipal Code
Atascadero, California



Current through Ordinance 614 and the March 2018 code supplement. For more recent amendments to this code, refer to the [CodeAlert](#) page.

This document is provided for informational purposes only. Please read the full [disclaimer](#).

- [Main Table of Contents](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Ordinance List](#)
- [Statutory References](#)
- [CodeAlert - Recently Passed Ordinances](#)

Links:

- [Atascadero, California - Home Page](#)

Contact:

City Clerk: (805) 470-3400

Atascadero Municipal Code

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Title 9 PLANNING AND ZONING

Chapter 11 NATIVE TREE REGULATIONS*
[Show All](#)

* **CodeAlert:** This topic has been affected by Ordinance No. [616](#). To view amendments and newly added provisions, please refer to the [CodeAlert Amendment List](#).

- 9-11.101 Purpose and intent.
- 9-11.102 Applicability.
- 9-11.103 Adoption of standards and guidelines.
- 🚩 9-11.104 Definitions.
- 🚩 9-11.105 Tree removal.
- 🚩 9-11.106 Tree protection plans.
- 🚩 9-11.107 Tree replacement and regeneration.
- 9-11.108 Tree abatement: nuisances, pests and disease.
- 9-11.109 Tree management plans.
- 9-11.110 Procedures for public projects.
- 🚩 9-11.111 Landmark trees.
- 9-11.112 Street trees.
- 9-11.113 Repeat applications.
- 9-11.114 Enforcement.

View the [mobile version](#).

- Visit the City of Atascadero website at www.atascadero.org and head to “City Departments,” “Community development,” then “Native Trees.”



The screenshot shows the City of Atascadero website. The main navigation bar includes: Home, I Want To..., Living Here, Doing Business Here, Visiting Here, Your Officials, and City Departments. The 'Native Trees' page is active, featuring a 'Community Development' sidebar with links to Building & Municipal Codes, Business Licenses, Development Process & Fees, Downtown Design Standards, General Plan, Permit Center, Building Forms, Planning Forms, Recent Projects, Commercial Signage, and Native Trees. The main content area is titled 'Native Trees' and includes a 'TREE CITY USA' logo. Below the logo, it states: 'The City has been a member of Tree City USA for over 25 years. Below is some information in regards to our efforts to protect and replant native trees within the City. The City of Atascadero protects 12 different native tree species, listed below.'

City of Atascadero Native Tree List		
Common Name	Scientific Name	Type
California Sycamore	<i>Platanus racemosa Nutt.</i>	Deciduous
Blue Oak/ Desert Oak Hybrid	<i>Quercus alvordiana Nee.</i>	Deciduous
Leather Oak	<i>Quercus durata Jeps.</i>	Deciduous
Blue Oak	<i>Quercus douglasii H&A</i>	Deciduous
Valley Oak	<i>Quercus lobata Nee</i>	Deciduous
Desert Oak	<i>Quercus turbinella</i>	Deciduous
Madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii Pursh.</i>	Non-Deciduous
Toyon, California Holly	<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia Lindl.</i>	Non-Deciduous
California Black Walnut	<i>Juglans hindsii Jeps.</i>	Non-Deciduous
Coast Live Oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia Eastw.</i>	Non-Deciduous
Scrub Oak	<i>Quercus dumosa Jeps.</i>	Non-Deciduous
California Bay Laurel	<i>Umbellularia californica Butt.</i>	Non-Deciduous

Below the table, there are three numbered links:

- 1 Want help identifying a native tree? Click [here](#) for a [Native Tree Identification Table](#).
- 2 Are you looking to develop on a property with native trees? Click [here](#) for a guide on how to install [tree protection fencing](#) to save our beautiful trees!
- 3 For access to Atascadero's [Native Tree Ordinance](#), view our municipal code [here](#).

Category: Community Development

Appendix A

California Sycamore

Platanus racemosa

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The California Sycamore is a native, deciduous tree that grows in riparian areas. The tree can grow up 80 feet tall with a 3 foot trunk and 20 to 30 foot crown. The mature bark on the trunk peels off leaving behind a new coat which may vary in color between white, cream, tan, or gray. Sycamores have light green, palmate leaves that begin to turn bronze at the beginning of autumn.



Alvord Oak

Quercus × alvordiana

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The Alvord Oak is a native, hybrid tree resulting from the crossing of a Blue Oak and a Desert Oak. The tree can reach up to 10 meters in height. The leaves of the tree are grey-green with serrated edges. The Alvord oak also produces a green acorn that turns bronze as it matures.



Leather Oak

Quercus durata

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The Leather Oak is an evergreen tree that is native to the State of California. These oaks usually reach a maximum of 12 feet in height and width of the crown. The trunk is a dark brown color with a furrowed or smooth bark. The leaves of the oak are dark green with an oblong shape and serrated edges. The oak produces a brown acorn that can be up to 1.5 inches long.



Blue Oak

Quercus douglasii H&A

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The blue oak is native, deciduous tree that can grow up to 50 feet tall with a crown that can span up to 50 feet in diameter. The trunk of the tree can be up to 2 feet in diameter with bark that is light gray and patterned in narrow thin strips. Blue oak leaves usually have wavy margins along with a waxy coating, giving them their characteristic bluish cast. The acorns are ¾" to 1-1/2" long, but shape, length and color may vary.



Valley Oak

Quercus lobata

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The Valley Oak is a deciduous, native tree known for its massive size. Valley Oaks are known to grow up to 70 feet tall with crowns that span over 50 feet in width. The trunk of the tree can exceed 5 feet in diameter with grayish bark that has a checkered pattern. The leaves of this oak are dark green and deeply lobed. This tree produces acorns 1" to 2" long, but shape, length and color vary.

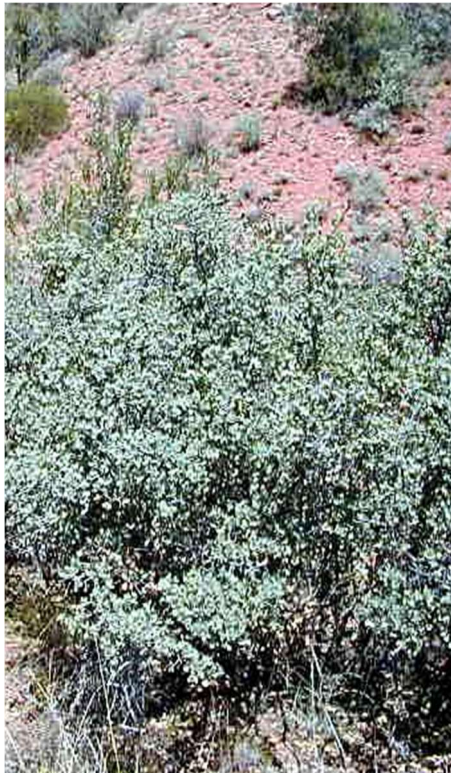


Desert Oak, Grey Oak

Quercus turbinella

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The Desert Oak, also known as the gray oak, is a deciduous, native tree that is considered rare in California. The tree can grow to be up 10 feet in height as well as crown diameter. The bark of the tree is grey. The leaves are yellow-green tint with serrated margins.

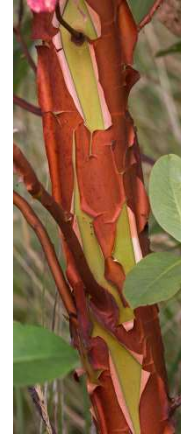


Madrone

Arbutus menziesii

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The Madrone is an evergreen, native tree known for its striking color and aromatic flowers. The tree can grow up to 80 feet tall with a crown diameter of 25 feet. The trunk diameter can reach up to 2 feet. The bark is a cinnamon red color and peels off every year in mid-summer to reveal a sleek, green coat underneath. The Madrone has dark green, elliptic leaves and fragrant pink or white flowers during the spring and small orange-red berries in the fall.



Toyon, California Holly

Heteromeles arbutifolia

Summary of Key Characteristics:

Toyon, also known as California Holly, is a native, evergreen tree known for the bright red berry-like fruit that hangs from its branches. The tree often grows between 15 to 25 feet in height with a crown that can span up to 15 feet. Toyon has dark green, oblong leaves that are sharply serrated. Clusters of five-petal, white flowers form during the summers which eventually produce the tree's fruit.



California Black Walnut

Juglans hindsii

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The California Black Walnut is a deciduous, native tree that is ranked as “seriously endangered in California” by the California Native Plant Society. The tree can reach up to 60 feet in height and crown diameter. The bark of the tree is dark brown. The leaves of the California Walnut are approximately 1-foot long and pinnately compound with dark green or gold color. The tree produces an edible nut with a thick brown or green shell.



Coast Live Oak

Quercus agrifolia

Summary of Key Characteristics:

Coast Live Oak is a native, evergreen oak that can grow up to 60 feet tall with a relatively smooth and gray trunk that can reach up to 4 feet in diameter. The trunk can be highly distorted and is often heavily branched creating a dense canopy that can be larger than the height of the tree. Coast live oaks have dark green, oval leaves that are convex with spines along the margin and produce brown acorns $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1-1/2" long.



Scrub Oak

Quercus dumosa

Summary of Key Characteristics:

Scrub oak is an evergreen, native plant that occurs both as a tree and as a shrub. The California Native Plant society has ranked the Scrub Oak as “seriously endangered in California.” The plant can reach heights of 12 feet with up to 10 foot crowns. The leaves have an elliptic shape, dark green color, and serrated margins. The scrub oak produces brown acorns that are approximately .5 inches long.



California Bay Laurel

Umbellularia californica

Summary of Key Characteristics:

The California Bay Laurel is an evergreen, native tree known for its fragrant aroma and culinary uses. This laurel can grow up to 75 feet in both height and crown diameter. The bark color varies in shades of brown. The leaves are dark green and oblong in shape. Both the leaves and the bark have a strong aroma. The flowers of the California Bay Laurel are mostly yellow and its fruit mostly green with occasional spots of yellow or purple.

