

Campus Tree Care Policy

Unit: [Facilities and Grounds](#)

Effective Date: 9/1/2010

Revision Date: 11/8/2018

Contact: Donna McCray

Title: Senior Director of Facilities Operations and
Grounds Use Permits

Purpose

Trees provide numerous benefits to the campus of The University of Alabama. The University strives to maintain, preserve, and enhance the forest/tree population within the University of Alabama campus (core and external properties). This partnership ensures the longevity of our campus tree population, increases the overall health of our urban forest canopy, and ensures necessary removal of any tree is managed in a manner consistent with local, state, and national tree health criteria. The University of Alabama Associate Vice President for Facilities and Grounds, Grounds Department, and Landscape Architect will partner together to provide the proper care and management to the campus forest.

Policy

Criteria for Tree and Vegetation Work

Specific criteria will be established and applied to the removal and/or pruning of trees, shrubs and/or vegetation located in or on UA property. The criteria will be used to evaluate the overall public benefit of the proposed work. In all cases, safety concerns will receive the highest priority. Priority will be given to limiting removal, increasing forest canopy, and preserving appropriate vegetation on university property. Misuse of any and all trees is prohibited (climbing, use of ropes, wire, hammocks, slack-lining, etc.). In order for a tree to be removed, it must meet the one or more of following criteria:

1. Dead or have reached or exceeded their useful lifespan and may present danger to life and property
2. Safety Hazard
3. Hazard to utility lines
4. Interferes with construction of facilities
5. Trees growing in inappropriate places such as too close to structures, sidewalks, or parking lots
6. Damaged trees from natural causes
7. Trees not consistent with the master plan
8. Approval by Landscape and Grounds Advisory Board/Board President; Associate Vice President for Facilities and Grounds

Hazardous Tree Management

Public health, safety and general welfare will be maintained using generally accepted professional practices of evaluation and treatment to reduce risks to people and property from hazardous trees. Attention to proper selection, planting and maintenance of new trees will also be pursued to achieve long-term risk reduction.

Pruning Standards

The latest pruning standards established by the International Society of Arboriculture will be used in the maintenance of vegetation. Maintenance is conducted on an as needed basis. Trees are evaluated and based on pruning needs are scheduled for pruning.

Topping Disallowed

Topping destroys the natural appearance of the tree and does not contribute to the campus aesthetics. Because “topping” of trees can cause permanent damage by promoting decay, as well as causing unnatural dense and weak branching structure, topping will not be practiced or permitted except under special circumstances.

Tree Retention and Protection (Daily / Construction Site)

Having healthy trees is a top priority to keep our campus beautiful. Misuse of any trees is prohibited. Examples of misuse include, but are not limited to climbing, use of ropes, wire, hammocks, slack-lines, zip-lines, nails, tape and signage, etc. All these issues cause stress, scaring and, often broken branches, which can lead to disease and/or death of an otherwise healthy tree and therefore is prohibited. In addition, it is strictly prohibited to intentionally climb in/on campus trees, break off limbs, and branches for personal convenience (i.e., tent and RV placement on campus). Trees on construction sites will be conserved wherever possible according to the [Construction Site Tree Protection Policy](#). Trees designated for retention will be protected from construction impacts according to standard plans and specifications. No equipment or vehicle shall be parked, or construction materials stored, or substance poured or disposed within the tree protection area (known as their drip line). Construction and grounds management practices (fencing, feeding, watering, limiting traffic over root, etc.) will be complied with throughout the construction process. Once construction projects are complete, any and all trees designated for protection shall receive deep root fertilization treatments for two years after project completion (once during the Spring and again during the Fall for two years). Often damage to tree roots on a construction site does not show up until years later. This will help ensure the overall health of the tree following any construction activities.

Conservation of Rare Specimens

Individual trees that are considered rare because of size, species or historical significance will be given extra protection and consideration for retention.

Diseased or Infested Plants That Pose Risk to Trees

Whenever possible, action will be taken to effectively decrease risk to other trees from pests and diseases. This may include removal and destruction of infected materials, pesticide treatments and/or alternative cultural practices. Other knowledgeable agencies, such as Local and State Cooperative Extensions, may be consulted as needed. However, as a minimum, UA Forester and Grounds Director will make an assessment and report their recommendation to the Associate Vice President of Facilities and Grounds.

Damage, Vandalism and Illegal Cutting

Whenever possible, action will be taken to investigate and prosecute vandalism, misuse (see paragraph titled: [Tree Retention and Protection](#)) and illegal cutting of UA trees. Vandalization and/or removal of trees or other vegetation from The University of Alabama property is a violation of this policy. Compensation for damages will be sought based on the appraised value.

Tree Replacement

Our goal is to ensure up to five trees will be planted for every tree that is removed from the University of Alabama core campus. However, the location of the replacement tree(s) may not always be the same as the location of the removed tree. Trees that are to be removed in construction areas shall be replaced, so that the tree volume is equal to the existing, replacement tree(s)/species and locations will be selected so that overall mature canopy volume will be maintained, or the tree(s) coincide with the overall landscape and building/facility needs and, finally, for overall aesthetics of the campus.

Tree Planting/Transplanting

Trees that are planted or transplanted should be done in a manner ensuring that the overall health of the tree is considered. The best time to plant or transplant trees is September to the end of February. This gives the tree the best chance at survival. Not all instances occur where trees will be able to be planted or transplanted during this timeframe. In these instances, any tree planted or transplanted shall be monitored on a regular basis and watered daily until tree has established its root system. Trees that are staked when planted shall have stakes checked in six months after

installing to ensure cables are not cutting into tree bark. If cables are no longer needed for the tree they shall be removed. Should cables still be needed the cables will be loosened so that they are not cutting into tree bark and reevaluated in six months.

Scope

This policy applies to faculty, staff, students, contractors, and guests of the University.

Office of the Vice President of Finance and Operations

Signed:  11/8/2018
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Cheryl Mowdy
Assistant Vice President for Finance and Operations