



OUR CITY TREES

Trees in the Los Altos community are a valuable asset. Trees contribute to more beautiful neighborhoods, provide shade to our homes, add value to our property, provide habitat for wildlife and absorb noise and pollutants. The urban forest that was created needs a working partnership between the residents of Los Altos and the City to ensure its survival.

Emergency Service: The City provides emergency service if a tree or limb falls onto the street or public property. The street will be cleared and the resident will have to remove the remaining debris.

After 5:00 p.m. or on weekends, please call 650/947-2770 to report any emergency tree problems.

City Maintained Trees: Street trees maintained by the City are defined as trees growing in the median area or adjacent to a rear yard in the public right of way. The Municipal Code defines street trees and contains regulations regarding their care.

Resident Maintained Street Trees: As stated in the Municipal Code Section 9.20.25 private property owners will maintain all other trees that are not maintained by the City.

Municipal Code 9.20.025 Trees – Property owner maintenance responsibility.

- a) The owner of a lot fronting on or adjacent to any portion of a street, except for properties located in commercial zoning districts designated CD, CN, CRS, CS, CT, OA, OAD, and PUD shall maintain any trees, shrubs, plants and flowers in the area fronting and along the side yard of the property between the property line and the back of curb or edge of pavement where no curbs exist in such a manner that the trees, shrubs, plants and flowers will not interfere with public safety or convenience in the use of the streets and sidewalks. Property owners shall maintain such trees so that there is a minimum nine-foot vertical pedestrian clearance and a minimum thirteen-foot vertical vehicular clearance from the top of the curb, edge of pavement, or adjacent ground surface (whichever is higher) to any part of the tree.
- b) For purposes of this part, maintenance of trees, shrubs, plants and flowers includes, but is not limited to: deep root watering, root pruning, installing root barriers, clearance and structural trimming, fertilizing, pest control, and removal of branches, leaves, and other debris. All trimming performed will be conducted in accordance with requirements of this code and conform to current standards as set forth in the American National Standards Institute ("ANSI") A300 "Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance Standard Practices" and the International Society of

Arboriculture ("ISA") "Tree Pruning Guidelines." Property owners shall perform pruning in compliance with the foregoing standards and guidelines.

- c) If any property owner fails to maintain any trees, shrubs, plants or flowers in a safe and passable condition as required by this section, and any person suffers damage or injury to person or property, the property owner shall be liable for all damages or injuries caused by the failure of the owner to maintain the trees, shrubs, plants or flowers.

Tree Work Permit Process: A permit to trim trees in the front yard/side yard on City right of way is not required. Proper trimming procedures to maintain the trees must be followed. City staff is not actively patrolling the streets looking for people who have improperly trimmed trees but will respond to complaints regarding improper tree trimming.

If you wish to remove or plant a tree on the City easement, you must apply to the Maintenance Division at 650/947-2785 for a no-fee permit. You may also email the Maintenance Division at: maintenance@ci.los-altos.ca.us. Permission to remove the tree may or may not be issued after inspection of the tree depending on established criteria.

Note: Questions about removal of significant trees (oak, redwood, bay laurel and sycamores) on private property will be answered by the City of Los Altos Community Development Department, 650/947-2750.

Street Tree Planting: The City plants trees in residential and commercial areas twice a year and only in a limited number. Neighborhoods without street trees have the first priority when scheduling planting and other requests will be considered if there are surplus trees.

Residents are encouraged to obtain a no-fee permit from the Maintenance Division to plant a street tree. After obtaining the permit, a property owner may purchase and plant in the right-of-way. The tree you plant must be selected from the City's official tree list and a root shield may be required. This list is provided on the next page. This effort to plant the right tree in the right planting site will help reduce future problems as the tree grows.

Generally, trees five years or younger should be watered once a week during the summer. To promote deep rooting and reduce sidewalk damage, a water basin around the tree should be used to hold water. Water applied within the basin will thoroughly moisten the tree's root zone without runoff.

Trees need space for root growth. Trunk rot can occur if plants or mulches are placed within one foot of the tree. Beyond one foot, annual or perennial plantings of your choice would add beauty to your home and neighborhood.

If you want to install concrete, asphalt paving or other hard surfacing in front of your residence, you will need to obtain an encroachment permit to install and maintain the surface according to City policies and requirements.

This permit must be obtained from the City of Los Altos Engineering Division at 650/947-2780.

City of Los Altos

Street Tree Planting List

Category I Trees that grow over 40 feet and need minimum 6 foot wide planting areas. Category I trees should not be planted under overhead utility lines.

Category II Trees that grow to 40 feet and require less than 6 feet of growing space.

Category III Trees that grow no higher than 30 feet.

Category I Deciduous Species:

Celtis australis-

European Hackberry

Reaches 45' to 75' tall with a 35' to 50' spread. Gray-green, elm-like leaves and growth habit. Tolerates heat, wind, and drought. Needs deep watering to establish. Resistant to Dutch Elm Disease. Not destructive of pavement.

Celtis sinensis-

Chinese Hackberry

Reaches 30' to 50' tall and broad with upright branching habit. Glossy, dark green, elm-like leaves. Tolerates wind. Very fast in deep soil with deep watering. Resistant to Dutch Elm Disease. Not tolerant of alkaline, wet soils.

Ginkgo biloba 'Fairmount' -

Maidenhair tree

Pyramidal form grows to 35' to 50' tall. Ashen gray bark with fan-shaped leaves with fall colors that range from pale green to brilliant gold. Only certified male trees should be planted.

Liquidambar styraciflua 'Palo Alto' -

Sweet Gum

Grows to 70' tall. Fall colors range from orange/red to bright red. Leaf resembles maple. Surface roots can be invasive in lawns or parking strips.

Platanus acerifolia -

London Plane Tree

A dependable performer if Anthracnose, Mildew and Scale are controlled. The 8" wide maple-like leaves have white wooly under-sides causing allergies for some people. Left unpruned, they will be 50' tall, pyramids. 'Bloodgood' not resistant to mildew. 'Yarwood' resistant to mildew and Anthracnose. 'Centennial' reported to be mildew resistant.

Quercus lobata -

Valley Oak

Appearing in areas with year round water availability. Magnificent structure reaches 70' high and broad with picturesque twisted branches. Gray, checkered bark. Medium gray, 2" lobed leaves with pale undersides. Fast growing when young. Good in riparian areas. Treat for Oak Pit Scale in winter. Do not use in lawns.

City of Los Altos Street Tree Planting List

Category I Evergreen Species:

Cinnamomum camphora-

Camphor tree

Broad-leaved evergreen that is a spreading, dense tree that provides deep heavy shade. Its light green leaves take on a bronze appearance in the winter. Roots tend to surface if only if surface moisture is available. Highly susceptible to oak root fungus.

Cedrus deodora

Deodar Cedar

Fast growing to 80' tall. Graceful, sweeping branches covered with blue-green needles in clusters. Cones are 4" tall, 3" round, standing on top of branches. Recognized by its drooping terminal leader. Too big for many yards.

Pinus canariensis

Canary Island Pine

Fast growing to 60' to 80' tall with pyramidal habit. Hanging, blue-green, 6" needles fully cover the majestic shape. Aphids can be a pest. Tolerates most soils. Oak root fungus resistant. Roots not destructive of pavement.

Pinus eldarica

Eldarica Pine

Tall, pyramidal and fast growing, to 40' tall in 15 years. Dark green when young, slightly grayer-green with age. Excellent Monterey Pine substitute. Tolerant of most soils.

Sequoia sempervirens

Coast Redwood

Tall, fast and pyramidal to 50', up to 100' tall at maturity. Cutting grown forms are: 'Soquel' - dense, gray-green, slower growing; 'Aptos Blue' - semi-open habit, green with gray undersides, fast; 'Los Altos' - dark glossy green, semi-open, fast; 'Santa Cruz' - paler green full, moderate. Must receive regular irrigation to remain disease free.

Quercus agrifolia

Coast Live Oak

The dark green domes which dominate California coastal hillsides. To 40' tall, 70' spread (or 70' tall, 40' spread in groves). 2" dark shining green rounded leaves with spined edges. Limbs and branches are twisting, gray. Fast growth when young. Do not use in lawn, or with other water loving understory.

City of Los Altos Street Tree Planting List

Category II Deciduous Species:

Fraxinus oxycarpa 'Raywood'

Raywood Ash

A rapid growing, oval upright tree to 40' tall. Dark green, leathery leaves turn claret red in fall. A lush, full crown all summer. Seedless and resistant to all common ash problems.

Koelreuteria bipinnata

Chinese Flame Tree

A 20' to 40' tall tree with a spreading crown; 2' long leaves, divided into many leaflets, turn yellow before dropping in December. 18" terminal clusters of yellow flowers in September-October. Fruit clusters are rust-colored lanterns.

Koelreuteria paniculata

Goldenrain Tree

To 20' to 35' tall with 10' to 20' rounded crown. Compound leaves are reddish in spring, dull green in summer. Spring flowers in upright, yellow clusters. Lantern-like, 2" seed pods in fall. Roots deep, not invasive.

Melaleuca styphelloides

Prickly Melaleuca

To 20' to 40' tall. Pendulous branchlets are thickly covered with 1/2" medium green leaves. The thick bark is papery, light tan. White flowers in small "bottlebrushes" appear summer through fall. Excellent lawn tree, even in heavy soil. Oak root fungus resistant.

Pistacia chinensis

Chinese Pistache

Highly regarded street tree and adopted as Official City tree. To 30' to 40' tall with a round crown. Dark green, 8" compound leaves. Brilliant orange and red fall colors. Grows best in hot climates with deep soil but tolerates most soils. Pest free. Non-destructive root systems. Resistant to oak root fungus.

Pyrus calleryana cultivara

Flowering Pear

'Aristocrat' is pyramidal when young becoming oval upright to 40' x 30'. 'Redspire' more pyramidal. 'Bradford' may reach 40' tall, 25' wide and be semi-deciduous in warmest areas. (Occasionally light infections of Fireblight.) Brilliant red fall color, masses of white flowers in spring. No fruit. Tolerant of alkaline and dense soils.

Robinia ambigua 'Idahoensis'

Idaho Locust

To 40' tall with upright branching. Medium green leaves to 12" long divided into 13 to 15, 1-1/2" leaflets. Flowers like deep pink Wisteria in drooping 8" clusters in late spring. Does not reseed. Must prune to form structure first two years.

City of Los Altos Street Tree Planting List

Category II Evergreen Species:

Ceratonia siliqua

Carob Tree

Dense rounded tree, 30' to 40' tall with equal spread. Dark green, compound leaves 8" to 12" long. Females bear numerous 8" pods. Flowers of male plants have strong odor. Budded male plants unavailable. Oak roots fungus resistant. Thin crown to prevent winter breakage.

Geijera parviflora

Australian Willow

Reaches 25' to 35' tall and wide. Narrow, 3" to 6" long, olive green leaves give the effect of a weeping willow. Use root barriers as street tree. A neat, carefree street tree. Does not tolerate inland valley winters or heavy adobe soil. Thin competing main limbs when young.

Maytenus boaria

Mayten tree

Evergreen tree. Zones 8, 9, 14-21. Slow to moderate growth to an eventual 30'-50'; 20' by 15' spread at 12 years is typical. Long, pendulous branchlets hang down from branches, giving tree daintiness and grace. Habit and leaves (1"-2" long) somewhat like small-scale weeping willow. Better tree for patio than weeping willow-neater and without invasive roots. Flowers and fruit inconspicuous.

Pittosporum undulatum

Victorian Box

Moderate growth to 15' x 15', then slower to 30'. Dark green 2-1/2" long wavy-margined leaves densely cover the round crown. The gray bark, beautiful branching and intensely fragrant white flowers in spring add character. Side branches should be removed from trunk gradually over three years. Some Aphids in spring and Brown Scale are occasional problems.

Quercus suber

Cork Oak

Similar in shape to Coast Live Oak, but growing to 30' tall. Foliage olive green on upper side, gray on underside. Spiny, convex 1" to 1-1/2" leaves. Massive trunks, thick corky bark. Very drought tolerant. Drops old foliage in late spring. Over-fertilizing results in heavy Aphid infestation.

Schinus molle

California Pepper Tree

Fast growing to 25' to 40' high, 30' to 60' broad. Gnarled tan trunk, weeping branches; bright green, pinnately compound leaves create a lacy look. Clusters of rose-colored berries in fall. Little care needed. Susceptible to Verticillium Wilt disease, Pepper Tree Pysllid, and Oak Root Fungus.

City of Los Altos Street Tree Planting List

Category III Deciduous Species:

Cercis canadensis

Eastern Redbud

To 30' tall and as wide in good soil. May be trained in a single-stem or multi-stem form. Before leaves in March, 3/4" broad and dark green. Fall color rosy to rust. Not tolerant of constantly wet clay soil.

Lagerstroemia indica

Crape Myrtle

A small tree 6' to 30' tall. Fast growing in hot areas. Smooth, gray-brown bark peels to pink inner bark. Red, purple, or white flowers July to September. Water infrequently but deeply. New hybrids 'Natchez', 'Tuscarora' and 'Muskogee' are mildew resistant. Not tolerant of high-sodium water.

Malus 'Robinson'

Robinson Crabapple

Bronze-green, 3" long leaves turn red-orange in fall. Deep pink flowers follow crimson buds in spring; 3/8" dark red, glossy fruit appears in late summer. A strong, upright grower to 25' tall and wide. Will tolerate heavier soils than most Crabapples. Resistant to Fireblight, Mildew.

Prunus cerasifera cultivars

Purpleleaf Plum

Most mature at 25' to 30' tall and as wide. 'Thundercloud'-some fruit, flowers light pink, dark foliage; 'Krauter's Vesuvius'-no fruit, flowers light pink, darkest foliage; 'Prunus blireiana'- double pink flowers, few fruit. Aphid problem in spring, bronze foliage. Not good in dense soils in lawn.

Prunus serrulata 'Kwanzan'

Flowering Cherry

Branches stiffly upright with large, double deep rosy pink flower in pendant clusters. Display with red young leaves. Does best in full sun.

Sapium sebiferum

Chinese Tallow Tree

Round, light green, 2-1/2" heart-shaped leaves flutter in the breeze. They turn a translucent mixture of red, orange, yellow in fall. Maturing at 30' with training or as a large shrub. The round crown may be scattered with 5" long pendulous clusters of small yellow flowers in summer, followed by waxy white 1/2" seeds. Oak root fungus resistant.