**Tree Removal**

Prior to the removal of any tree from a non-single family zoned property, the owner must submit a permit application, which must be approved prior to the tree’s removal. The permit application is available on the City’s web site.

No permit is required for removal of a tree on private property that is zoned single family.

**Heritage and Historic Trees**

In order to protect significant trees, the City has established the Heritage and Historic tree designations. A Heritage tree is any tree greater than 20” in diameter. A Heritage tree that is removed must be replaced with a minimum of two four-inch caliper shade trees. A Historic tree is any tree greater than 30” in diameter located within any required setback or buffer area. A Historic tree that is removed must be replaced with a minimum of four four-inch caliper shade trees.

**Additional Information and Resources:**

- City of Greenville Landscape Ordinance  
  www.greenvillesc.gov/PlanningZoning/landscaping.aspx
- Tree Removal Permit Application  
  www.greenvillesc.gov/PlanningZoning/forms/LandscapeOrdinance/PDF/TreeRemovalForm.pdf
- ANSI A300 Pruning Standards  
  https://secure.tcia.org

**Select Content and Photos Provided By:**

- Clemson University Cooperative Extension  
  www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/trees/hgic1009.html
- South Carolina Living  
  www.scliving.coop/outside/scgardener/11-02-01/Stop_the_crapemurder.aspx

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**Four Steps to Properly Prune Crape Myrtles**

1. **Remove broken and dead limbs**  
   Inspect the tree and envision the canopy with branches arching from its center. Keep in mind that the limbs will bear six to 12 inch flower clusters.

2. **Start at the bottom**  
   Using pruning shears, remove suckers from the base and thin outside branches from the bottom one-third to one-half of the trunk. Be sure to remove the entire shoots or limbs from their point of attachment to the trunk.

3. **Work up to the top**  
   Keeping the image of a full, arching canopy, prune the framework to support it. Removing the tree’s structure will create spindly shoots, so keep three to five of the thick, well-attached and outward-growing shoots. Remove the rest. If you want to remove the seed heads in winter or early spring, this should be performed cautiously and in a manner that does not significantly decrease the canopy of the tree.

4. **Touch up**  
   Remove lower branches as needed as the tree grows taller. To maintain a manageable height, prune moderately by removing twiggy growth back to the underside of the canopy.

For additional information or questions, contact: Parks & Recreation Department (864) 467-4355
Tree Removal

The purpose of the City of Greenville’s landscaping requirements is to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for property owners, residents and the general public. The requirements are intended to maintain and enhance property values; preserve the urban tree canopy; enhance the appearance of developments; provide adequate buffers between different land uses; improve the character, appearance and micro-climate of the city; improve heat and noise abatement and reduce erosion and stormwater runoff.

In 2011, City Council revised the City’s Land Management Ordinance, including Section 19-6.2 Landscaping, buffering, and screening, which applies to all properties except those that are zoned single family residential.

Violations and Enforcement

Excessive pruning, topping, “crape murder” and “lion’s tailing” are unacceptable practices and will result in the property being in violation of the City’s Code of Ordinances. Such a violation will result in the property being non-compliant and the property owner will be required to plant new trees and shrubs in accordance with the current standards of the City’s ordinance.

Topping - This term is used to describe the indiscriminate cutting of tree branches, usually in an attempt to control size. This technique is unnecessary and is harmful to the tree.

“Crape Murder” - This term is used to describe topped or excessively pruned trees. The moniker was given to this technique because it maims the tree and exposes it to disease. Crape myrtles do not require heavy pruning to bloom. Crape myrtles should be shaped into a tree form.

“Lion’s Tailing” - This term is used to describe the removal of an excessive number of inner and/or lower lateral branches. Lion’s tailing is not an acceptable pruning practice.

The tree to the right is an example of “crape murder” versus its healthy counterpart shown on the left.

This young bald cypress tree does not require frequent pruning, however, it was pruned improperly by topping and is in violation of the Ordinance.

The tree to the left needs pruning. The tree to the right has been pruned properly to show definition and to create a canopy. Photos courtesy of www.scliving.com

Code of Ordinance

According to Section 19-6.2.1(E) Maintenance, the following regulations are required of all non-single family residential properties within the city. The owner of the property where landscaping is required shall be responsible for the maintenance and protection of all plant and screening material for the duration of the premises.

1. All landscape material, maintenance and management shall conform to the minimum standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations.

2. Landscaped areas shall be maintained in good condition and kept free of dead plants, weeds or debris. Failure to maintain or replace dead, damaged or diseased plant material or to repair a broken wall or fence within 30 days of notification shall constitute a violation of this section.

3. Trees may not be severely trimmed beyond the standards of ANSI A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations. If aggressive trimming occurs, the property will be considered non-conforming and required to replace the trees with trees meeting the minimum size, spacing and quantity standards of this section.