



## **Tree Removal Information for Homeowners in Gwinnett County**

### ***Common Questions Homeowners Ask About Tree Removal***

**Q1. Do I have to obtain a permit to cut down a tree on my property?**

A1. A permit may be required, in some cases. Individual homeowners are not required to obtain a tree removal permit unless that tree is located in a required Zoning Buffer, Conservation or Open Space, the Chattahoochee River Corridor or designated Tree Save Area.

Note: If you believe you have a specimen tree on your property please refer to Question (6) six below.

**Q2. How do I find out if I have a Buffer, Conservation or Open Space, or Tree Save Area on my property?**

A2. Obtain a copy of the Final Plat of your subdivision. The information you will need is listed or shown on the plat.

**Q3. Where do I go to obtain a copy of the final plat of my subdivision?**

A3. Go to the Deed Records Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Gwinnett Justice & Administration Center, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, Georgia, (phone 770.822.8150). There is a charge of \$2 per oversized copy.

**Q4. How do I find out if I live in the Chattahoochee River Corridor?**

A4. If your lot is within 2,000 lineal feet from the Chattahoochee River it is considered in the Chattahoochee River Corridor. To determine if your lot is in the Chattahoochee River Corridor please call 678.518.6000.

**Q5. What is a specimen tree?**

A5. A tree that loses its leaves in the fall, such as a maple tree, is considered a hardwood tree. Any hardwood tree 28 inches or larger in diameter is considered a specimen tree. A tree that is green all year such as a pine tree is considered a softwood tree. Any softwood tree 30 inches or larger in diameter is considered a specimen tree. A native flowering tree 12 inches or larger in diameter is considered a specimen tree such as a dogwood tree.

Note: The diameter of a tree is measured at 4.5 feet above the ground. To roughly estimate the diameter you can measure half the circumference.

**Q6. Can I remove a specimen tree that is located on my property? (Reference: Gwinnett County Unified Development Ordinance, Section 630-70.1)**

A6. If you believe the tree is a specimen, we recommend you contact the Department of Planning and Development Office - Development Plan Review Section at 678.518.6000 prior to removal. If the tree is healthy we recommend you consult with an arborist or registered forester for information about proper pruning and care. A listing for a certified arborist can be found at [www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com).

**Q7. What if the tree is dead or dying and it is located in a Buffer, Open Space, Conservation Space, the Chattahoochee River Corridor, or Tree Save Area?**

A7. Contact your Property Owners Association for tree removal. Also, consult the protective covenants for your subdivision for guidelines. Gwinnett County cannot enforce Protective Covenants. If the tree is located in the Chattahoochee River Corridor and it is dead it may be removed manually (no motorized vehicles). The stump must remain intact.

**Q8. How do I find out the zoning of my property?**

A8. Contact the Current Planning Section at 678.518.6200 or 678.518.6000 or visit their office at One Justice Square, 446 West Crogan Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Suite 225, Lawrenceville, 30046. Be prepared to provide your address and/or the district, land lot & parcel number of your property.

**Q9. Do trees located on my property have to be dead before I remove them?**

A9. No. A homeowner can remove live trees from their property provided they are not located in a required Zoning Buffer, Conservation or Open Space, Chattahoochee River Corridor, or Tree Save Area. If you do remove live trees from your property it is a requirement you keep at least two live trees and any specimen trees located on your lot. Please refer to Questions (5) five and (6) six on the previous page for specimen tree information.

**Q10. What do I do if a tree located on my property has fallen?**

A.10. Call a tree removal service or a certified arborist. A listing for a certified arborist can be found at [www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com). Another source is the Yellow Pages.

**Q11. What do I do if a street tree has fallen which originated in the street right-of-way?**

A11. Find out whether it is a Gwinnett County road or a State of Georgia highway. For the Gwinnett Department of Transportation, call 770.822.7400. For the Georgia Department of Transportation, call 404.656.5267.

**Situations where individual homeowners can remove live trees without a permit from Gwinnett County:**

1. Any tree located on residentially zoned property of an individual homeowner as long as that tree is not located in the Chattahoochee River Corridor, or;
2. Any dead or dying tree in a stream buffer if that buffer is on your property, or;
3. See Questions (1) one, (4) four and (5) five for specimen tree preservation requirements.

**Situations where an individual homeowner cannot remove live trees:** (Reference: Gwinnett County Unified Development Ordinance, subsections 210-50.6.B and C; 320-130.3; 340-20.2.B; 630-20.3.B.; and 630-70.1)

1. Any tree located in a required Zoning Buffer, Conservation or Open Space, Chattahoochee River Corridor, or Tree Save Area or is a specimen tree.
2. Any tree that is not located on your own property.

Note: Properties located in the Chattahoochee River Corridor are subject to the Metropolitan River Protection Act and require review by the Department of Planning and Development.

Note: Properties zoned commercial, office-institutional, industrial, or multi-family must obtain a Land Disturbance Permit (LDP) in order to remove any trees. Contact the Department of Planning and Development at 678.518.6000.