



Town of Cohasset
41 Highland Avenue
Cohasset MA 02025



**TOWN OF COHASSET
PUBLIC TREE POLICY
rev. February 2022**

Section 1. Definitions:

- A. Street Trees: "Street Trees" are herein defined as trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other wood vegetation on land living between property lines on either side of all streets, avenues, or ways within the Town.
- B. Park Trees: "Park Trees" are herein defined as trees, shrubs, bushes and all other wood vegetation in public parks having individual names, and all areas owned by the Town, or to which the public has free access as a park.

Section 2. Tree Species:

- A. The following list constitutes the official Street Tree Species for the Town of Cohasset, Massachusetts.

SMALL TREES	MEDIUM TREES	LARGE TREES
Crabapple - flowering	Ash, green	Elm, American
Plum - flowering	Ash, white	Maple, silver
Hawthorn	Locust	Maple, Sugar
Cherry - flowering	Oak	Oak, Pin
Dogwood	Linden, littleleaf	Sycamore
Magnolia	Maple, Norway	Tulip
Ginkgo	Maple, red	Oak, Scarlet
		Superform Maple

- B. No species other than those included in this list shall be planted as Street Trees without written permission of the Town Tree Warden.

Section 3: Spacing:

- A. The spacing of Street Trees will be in accordance with the tree species size and classes listed in section 2 of this policy, and no tree may be planted closer than the following:

Section 4: Distances:

- A. The distance trees may be planted from curbs and curb lines and sidewalks, will be in accordance with the three species size and classes listed in section 2 of this policy, and no tree may be planted closer to any curb or sidewalk than the following:
 - a. Small Trees – 2’;
 - b. Medium Trees – 3’;
 - c. and Large Trees – 4”.
 - d. No Street Tree shall be planted closer than thirty (30’) feet of any street corner measuring from the point of nearest intersecting curbs or curb lines.
 - e. No Street Trees shall be planted closer than ten (10’) feet of any fire hydrant.
 - f. No Street Trees other than those species listed as Small Trees in section 7 of this policy may be planted under or within ten (10’) lateral feet of any overhead utility wire, or within five (5’) lateral feet of any underground water line, sewer line, transmission line or other utility.

Section 5: Public Tree Care:

- A. The Town shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees, plants and shrubs within the lines of all streets, alleys, avenue, lanes, squares, and public grounds, as may be necessary to ensure public safety or to preserve or enhance the symmetry and beauty of such public grounds.
- B. The Town Tree Warden may remove or cause or order to be removed, any tree or part thereof which is in an unsafe condition or which by reason of its nature is injurious to sewers, electric power lines, gas lines, water lines or other public improvements, or is affected with any injurious fungus, insect or other pest.

Section 6: Topping and Pruning:

- A. It shall be unlawful as a normal practice for any person, firm or Town department to top any Street Tree, Park Tree, or other tree on public property. Topping is defined as severe cutting back of limbs to stubs larger than three (3”) inches in diameter within the tree’s crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree. Trees severely damaged by storms or other obstructions where pruning practices are impractical may be exempt from this policy at the determination of the Town Tree Warden.
- B. Every owner of any tree overhanging any street or right-of-way within the Town shall prune the branches so that such branches shall not obstruct the light from any street

lamp or obstruct the view of any street intersection and so that there shall be a clear space of fourteen (14') feet above the surface of the street and eight (8') feet from the surface of the sidewalk. Said owners shall remove all dead, diseased or dangerous trees, or broken or decayed limbs which constitute a menace to the safety of the public. The Town shall have the right to prune any tree or shrub on private property when it interferes with proper spread of light along the street from a street light or interferes with the visibility of any traffic control device or sign.

Section 7. Stump Removal:

- A. All stumps of Street and Park Trees shall be removed below the surface of the ground so that the top of the stump shall not project above the surface of the ground.

Section 8. Enforcement:

- A. Trees which fall within the definitions of the Massachusetts Shade Tree Ordinance (MGL Chapter 87) shall also be managed pursuant to this section of law.
- B. The Tree Warden is empowered to conduct hearings and impose penalties as described in MGL Chapter 87.
- C. The Cohasset Select Board shall hear appeals of the orders of the Tree Warden pursuant to MGL Chapter 87 Section 4.
- D. The Cohasset Select Board may recommend the inclusion of penalties within the authority provided by MGL Chapter 87 per incident.

Section 9. Restoration:

- A. All proposals for cutting and removal of Protected Trees, by whoever initiated, shall include a plan for restoration or mitigation of the activity.
- B. Replacement of a removed tree shall be the preferred alternative in all cases, but where not feasible, a payment to the Cohasset Tree Bank, established hereunder shall be made.
- C. A replacement tree shall be of nursery grade quality, of like species as the one removed (unless an undesirable invasive species), and shall be of a size and caliper as reasonably determined by the Tree Warden on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the size of the tree removed and availability and cost of the replacement, but must have a minimum caliper of two (2) inches. Compensation to the Cohasset Tree Bank in lieu of replacement shall be in an amount equal to a reasonable replacement tree as determined by the Tree Warden.

- D. The replacement shall be verified by the Tree Warden. If payment to the Tree Bank is to be made in lieu of replacement, the Tree Warden may determine a compensatory value for which the applicant shall be responsible which is equal to the value for nursery grade tree stock that would be ordered as a replacement plus installation.
- E. The Tree Warden may also require compensation to the Cohasset Tree Bank if a Protected Tree is cut to such an extent that it is at risk of dying within a short term, or is at risk of other portions of the tree collapsing, or is substantially compromised aesthetically pursuant to the considerations set forth in the previous paragraph. Such compensation shall be up to one-half the cost of a replacement tree were one required.
- F. If a Protected Tree that is cut dies within two years as a direct and proximate result of the extent of the cutting, then the Tree Warden shall order the responsible party to make replacement.

Section 10. Town of Cohasset Tree Bank

- A. There is hereby established a Town of Cohasset Tree Bank ("Tree Bank") which shall be held by the Town Treasurer in an account administered by the Department of Public Works in accordance with applicable provisions of the General Laws. Funding shall come as part of the mitigation process set forth herein, but also may come from any contribution by a citizen or other party, or by Town appropriation for such purpose, and shall be used solely for the purpose of buying, planting and maintaining trees in the Town.