

# SDCI

# Director's Rule X-2023

<b>Applicant:</b>  City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections	<b>Page</b> 1 of 3	<b>Supersedes:</b> DR 16-2008
	<b>Publication:</b> X/XX/2023	<b>Effective:</b> X/XX/2023
<b>Subject:</b>  Designation of Tier 2 Trees	<b>Code and Section Reference:</b> SMC 25.11 – Tree Protection SMC 25.05.675N – State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)	
	<b>Type of Rule:</b> Code Interpretation	
	<b>Ordinance Authority:</b> SMC 3.06.040	
<b>Index:</b> Land Use Code/Technical Standards and Procedural Requirements	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Date</b>
	(signature on file) <i>Nathan Torgelson, Director, SDCI</i>	2/XX/2023

## Purpose

The purpose of this Rule is to provide further guidance for Tier 2 trees pursuant to Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 25.11.

## Rule

### **SECTION 1: MEASUREMENT OF TREE DIAMETER**

Diameter at standard height (DSH), which means the diameter of a tree trunk measured at 4.5 feet above average grade, is used in determining the diameter of existing trees. Where a tree has branch(es) or swelling that interferes with measurement at 4.5 feet above average grade or where a tree tapers below this point, the diameter is measured at the most narrow point below 4.5 feet. For trees located on a slope, the 4.5 feet is measured from the average of the highest and lowest ground points or, on very steep slopes where this is not possible, the lowest practical point on the uphill side. Where a tree splits into several trunks close to ground level, the DSH for the tree is the square root of the sum of the DSH for each individual stem squared (i.e. - a tree with three stems:  $DSH = \text{square root} [(stem1)^2 + (stem2)^2 + (stem3)^2]$ ).

## SECTION 2: TIER 2 TREE DESIGNATION

Table 1 provides a list of size thresholds for Tier 2 trees. In addition, any named cultivars or subspecies of species on the following list have the same diameter threshold as the species on the list. For example, a Japanese maple cultivar (*Acer palmatum* “Burgundy Lace”) has the same threshold diameter as Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*).

For all species not listed in Table 1, the threshold diameter is 24” or greater, except that the following are not Tier 2 trees regardless of the size measured at DSH:

- Red alder (*Alnus rubra*), black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra* ‘italica’), and bitter cherry (*Prunus emarginata*)
- Any tree that is listed on the adopted and as subsequently revised King County Noxious Weed List, including weeds of concern

**Table 1: Size Thresholds for Tier 2 Trees**

ALDER, Sitka – <i>Alnus sinuata</i>	6”
APPLE, Orchard (Common) – <i>Malus sp.</i>	20”
ASH, European – <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	22”
ASPEN, Quaking – <i>Populus tremuloides</i>	12”
BIRCH, Paper – <i>Betula papyrifera</i>	20”
CASCARA – <i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	8”
CHERRY, Japanese Flowering – <i>Prunus sp.</i> ( <i>kwanzan, serrula, serrulata, sargentii, subhirtella, yedoensis</i> )	23”
CRABAPPLE, Pacific – <i>Malus fusca</i>	12”
DOGWOOD, Eastern – <i>Cornus florida</i>	12”
DOGWOOD, Kousa – <i>Cornus kousa</i>	12”
DOGWOOD, Pacific – <i>Cornus nuttallii</i>	6”
HAWTHORN, Black – <i>Crataegus douglasii</i>	6”
HAWTHORN, Common <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> Jacq.	16”
HAWTHORN, Washington – <i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	9”
HORNBEAM, European – <i>Carpinus betulus</i>	16”
LOCUST, Honey – <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	20”
MADRONA – <i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	6”
MAGNOLIA, Southern – <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	16”
MAPLE, Dwarf or Rocky Mountain – <i>Acer glabrum</i> <i>var. Douglasii</i>	6”
MAPLE, Japanese – <i>Acer palmatum</i>	12”
MAPLE, Paperbark – <i>Acer griseum</i>	12”
MAPLE, Vine – <i>Acer circinatum</i>	8”
MONKEY PUZZLE TREE – <i>Araucaria araucana</i>	22”
OAK, Oregon White or Garry – <i>Quercus garryana</i>	6”
PEAR, Callery – <i>Pyrus calleryana</i>	13”
PINE, Lodgepole – <i>Pinus contorta</i>	6”

PINE, Shore – <i>Pinus contorta</i> ‘contorta’	12”
PLUM, CHERRY – <i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	21”
SERVICEBERRY, Western – <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	6”
SNOWBELL, Japanese – <i>Styrax japonica</i>	12”
SPRUCE, Sitka – <i>Picea sitchensis</i>	6”
WILLOW (All native species) – <i>Salix sp. (Geyeriana ver meleina, eriocephala ssp. mackenzieana, Hookeriana, Piperi, Scouleriana, sitchensis)</i>	8”
YEW, Pacific – <i>Taxus brevifolia</i>	6”

<sup>1</sup> This table is based on Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 2016, by Jim Pojar, Andy MacKinnon  
Trees and Shrubs of the Pacific Northwest, 2014, by Mark Turner, Ellen Kuhlmann  
Trees of Seattle, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2006, by Arthur Lee Jacobson.  
Champion Trees of Washington State, 1996, by Robert Van Pelt.  
International Society of Arboriculture, <https://www.isa-arbor.com/>

### SECTION 3: USE OF THIS RULE IN THE APPLICATION OF SEPA

The policy provided in SMC 25.05.675.N.2.c calls for protecting specific special habitat:

- Rare, uncommon, unique or exceptional plant or wildlife habitat; or
- Wildlife travelways; or
- Habitat diversity for species (plants or animals) of substantial aesthetic, educational, ecological or economic value

If determined through SEPA review that a proposed project would reduce or damage one or more of these special habitats, a Tier 2 tree that may otherwise be approved for removal per Chapter 25.11 may be required to be retained.