

Director's Rule X-2023

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

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 = square root [(stem1)^ + (stem2)^ + (stem3)^)].

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).

<u>For all species not listed in Table 1, the threshold diameter is 24" or greater</u>, 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

Table 1: Size Inresholds for Her 2 Trees	
ALDER, Sitka – Alnus sinuata	6"
APPLE, Orchard (Common) – Malus sp.	20"
ASH, European – Fraxinus excelsior	22"
ASPEN, Quaking – Populus tremuloides	12"
BIRCH, Paper – Betula papyrifera	20"
CASCARA – Rhamnus purshiana	8"
CHERRY, Japanese Flowering – Prunus sp.	23"
(kwanzan, serrula, serrulata, sargentii, subhirtella,	
yedoensis)	
CRABAPPLE, Pacific – Malus fusca	12"
DOGWOOD, Eastern – Cornus florida	12"
DOGWOOD, Kousa – Cornus kousa	12"
DOGWOOD, Pacific – Cornus nuttallii	6"
HAWTHORN, Black – Crataegus douglasii	6"
HAWTHORN, Common Crataegus monogyna Jacq.	16"
HAWTHORN, Washington – Crataegus	9"
phaenopyrum	
HORNBEAM, European – Carpinus betulus	16"
LOCUST, Honey – Gleditsia triancanthos	20"
MADRONA – Arbutus menziesii	6"
MAGNOLIA, Southern – Magnolia grandiflora	16"
MAPLE, Dwarf or Rocky Mountain – Acer glabrum	6"
var. Douglasii	
MAPLE, Japanese – Acer palmatum	12"
MAPLE, Paperbark – Acer griseum	12"
MAPLE, Vine – Acer circinatum	8"
MONKEY PUZZLE TREE – Araucaria araucana	22"
OAK, Oregon White or Garry – Quercus garryana	6"
PEAR, Callery – Pyrus calleryana	13"
PINE, Lodgepole – <i>Pinus contorta</i>	6"

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

¹ This table is based on Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 2016, by Jim Pojar, Andy MacKinnon

<u>Trees of Seattle, 2nd edition</u>, 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.

Trees and Shrubs of the Pacific Northwest, 2014, by Mark Turner, Ellen Kuhlmann