

Marco Island Tree Planting Guidelines

Rules, ordinances and recommendations for planting on public property

Selection

1. Trees should be regionally appropriate whenever possible.
2. Trees should be selected for the “right tree for the right place” criteria, including:
 - a. Non-invasive roots
 - b. Wind resistant
 - c. Low fertilizer needs
 - d. Low water needs
 - e. Appropriate height
 - f. Low maintenance for the city / no maintenance for residents
 - g. Interference with utilities
 - h. Low pest and disease issues
3. Priority should be given to palms and trees which provide a unique sense of place for Marco Island, with a focus on trees which are ornamental or provide strong value (such as shade, flowering or ornamental value). When possible, consider trees and palms which are native to Florida and the Caribbean.
4. Quality: Plant material must meet the standards for Florida No. 1 or better, as set out in Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Part I and Part II, Department of Agriculture, State of Florida (as amended). (Ordinance 11-07)

Planting size considerations

1. Trees in residential districts and parks should have a minimum of 1-inch diameter at planting and no less than 4 feet of grey trunk at planting, when possible. Palms should have a minimum of 2 feet of grey trunk at planting, when possible.
2. Trees in highly commercial districts should have a minimum of 2-inch diameter and no less than 4 feet of brown trunk at planting, when possible. Palms should have a minimum of 2 feet of grey trunk at planting, when possible.
3. All required new individual palms and trees shall be species having an average mature spread or crown greater than 20 feet and having trunk(s), which can be maintained in a clean condition with over ten feet of clear wood. Trees adjacent to walkways, bike paths and rights-of-way shall be maintained in a clean condition with over ten feet of clear wood. Trees having an average mature spread or crown less than 20 feet may be substituted by groupings of the same to create the equivalent of a 20-foot crown spread. (Ordinance 11-07)

Location / mapping considerations

1. Trees must be planted a minimum of 3 feet or more from the sidewalk and must be planted on the sidewalk side of the flowline. Trees with extensive root systems planted near sidewalks, streets and parking lots may require root barriers.
2. Trees or palms cannot be planted within the flow line of a swale. (Section 30-435 Marco Island Land Development Code)
3. Trees over sidewalks need to have a 7.5-foot clearance. (City Ordinance 98-19)
4. Shade trees, fruit trees, conifers and flowering trees should be planted 30’ apart; alternatively planted at one tree per residential lot. Smaller dicots, such as orange geigers, can be planted 15 feet or 20 feet apart.
5. Palms can be planted at either 15 feet apart, 20 feet or 30 feet apart; alternatively planted at one tree per residential lot.

6. Trees or palms should mature or be maintained at a height which remains outside of a 12-foot separation from the high voltage power lines. Standard radial clearance performed by Lee County Electrical Cooperative (LCEC) will be 10 feet from primary lines, except palms which will have their fronds tipped or cut back to the trunk to prevent contact with primary lines resulting from growth, dropping, or blow-in during periods of high wind. LCEC's standard vertical clearance will be 12 feet below primary lines or one foot below the lowest communication line, whichever is greater. Palms found below the neutral line are exempt from this standard. Palms growing above the neutral line have their fronds cut tipped to below the neutral line. If the neutral line is horizontally parallel to the primary, then a 6-foot standard will be used in place of the neutral.
7. Trees or palms planted adjacent to overhead utility lines should have a mature spread that will not interfere with utility lines. Trees which exceed the height of the powerlines should be planted so they are in a location where the radius of the tree will mature to a distance that does not interfere with the powerlines.
8. Trees should be planted at least 5 feet away from underground water and sewer pipes. For the larger pad-mount LCEC transformers, all vegetation must have an 8-foot space in its front and 3-feet on each side of the enclosure. Smaller pedestals should have a minimum of two feet of clearance from all vegetation.
9. All utilities, easements, rights-of-way (ROWs), ownership, and/or other survey data shall be verified by the General Contractor, Sitework Contractor, and/or Landscape Contractor prior to the commencement of Work.
10. Planting in rights-of-way (ROWs), including swales, requires a city permit.
11. On medians and parking lot islands, select trees with clear trunk(s) or limbed up to 5 feet minimum above the sight line datum
12. Plantings should include entry and exit features with a different species on streets, when possible, to add diversity.
13. Small or narrow swales should be planted with trees with narrow spreads or palms.
14. Wide rights-of-ways (ROWs) which can accommodate larger trees and root systems may be planted with trees that require larger areas for their canopies and root systems.
15. Whenever possible, areas near waterways should be planted with evergreen trees or palms to reduce the risk of debris entering the water.
16. Streets which already have been partially planted with appropriate trees can be planted with the same species along with two to three complementary species to add diversity in a manner that is visually appealing.
17. Streets which bear a common tree name should be planted, when practical, with a species which honors the street name (Magnolia Court could be lined with magnolias.)
18. On stretches at or shorter than 300 feet in length, a single species of tree should be planted. On stretches longer than 300 feet, two or more species may be planted in sequence spanning 300 feet or more. For example, 10 trees of the same species can be planted 30 feet apart, which may be followed by a different species for the next 300 feet.
19. Matching species of trees should be planted on both sides of a roadway unless it is not possible because of infrastructure or other limiting factors.

Tree planting season

1. Whenever possible, trees and palms should be planted starting during the months of May through August to take full advantage of the rainy season.

Tree maintenance considerations

1. Trees which require more maintenance, including larger trees, should be planted in commercial areas or adjacent to publicly owned properties.
2. Utility pruning must conform to current ANSI A-300 standards when performing line clearing work within public right-of-way. Franchised utilities must have an ISA certified arborist directing the pruning of public and private trees. Utility pruning should only provide minimum safe clearance to protect energized power lines with consideration for the combined movement of the conductors near trees in severe weather, the species of the tree, and the voltage of the conductor. (Ordinance 11-07)
3. Canopy and root pruning: When activities affect public or private trees so that more than 50 percent of the area within the dripline is disturbed, or when pruning must be performed on the crown of a public or private tree, the following arboricultural techniques are required: (Ordinance 11-07)
 - a. When the area within the dripline will be disturbed, the affected roots must be severed by clean pruning cuts where the activity impacts the roots. Roots may be pruned by utilizing trenching equipment that is specifically designed for this purpose or by hand digging a trench and pruning roots with a chain saw, pruning saw or other equipment designed for tree pruning. Roots within the dripline shall be pruned to a depth of 12 inches below existing grade or to the depth of the disturbance if less than 12 inches from the existing grade. When underground utilities are to be installed through the dripline, root pruning requirements may be waived by the city manager or designee if the lines are installed via tunneling or directional boring. (Ordinance 11-07)
 - b. All pruning of public or private trees shall conform to the current ANSI standards defined herein and shall be supervised by an ISA certified arborist. There shall be no flush cuts, stub cuts, or lion's tailing of the crown of the tree. (Ordinance 11-07)
 - c. It shall be a violation of this section to perform the techniques of topping, hat racking or other pruning techniques that remove the vertical leader stems or other pruning which results in an unnecessary reduction of shade of public or private trees. (Ordinance 11-07)
4. Care and maintenance of public trees on city owned property: The city manager shall designate a department to be responsible for the care and maintenance of public trees on city owned property. Public trees are city street trees, median trees and cul-de-sac trees as defined in section 30-10. The department shall adhere to the maintenance and pruning standards contained in Ordinance 11-07 when maintaining public trees on city property. The department director shall make reports and requests for funds for the care and maintenance of public trees, including needed planting and replanting, to the city council as part of the annual budget approval process. Before removing any public tree from the right-of-way, the department director shall notify the city manager and any other affected department directors. (Ordinance 11-07)
5. Private care and maintenance of public trees on city owned property. Private property owners may make a written request to the city manager or designee for permission to care for and maintain public trees on public property. Property owners shall adhere to the maintenance and pruning standards contained herein when maintaining publicly owned trees on city property. Before replanting, removal or replacement of any public tree, a private property owner shall obtain the permission of the city manager or designee to plant the tree, shrub or other vegetation and, if necessary, apply for a vegetation removal permit from the city manager or designee in accordance with Article XIV. If the replanting shall be in the right-of-way (ROW), the property owner shall obtain a permit from the City in accordance with Section 42-76. Fees for a permit for vegetation removal or replanting shall be waived for public trees. (Ordinance 11-07)

For information about this document, please contact the Marco Island Beautification Advisory Committee.