

The Oak Tree Ordinance



The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance has been established to recognize oak trees as significant historical, aesthetic, and ecological resources. The goal of the ordinance is to create favorable conditions for the preservation and propagation of this unique and threatened plant heritage. By making this part of the development process, healthy oak trees will be preserved and maintained.

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance applies to all unincorporated areas of the County. Individual cities may have adopted the county ordinance or their own ordinance which may be more stringent.

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:

Under the Los Angeles County Ordinance, a person shall not cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the protected zone of any tree of the oak tree genus, which is 8" or more in diameter four and one-half feet above mean natural grade or in the case of oaks with multiple trunks a combined diameter of twelve inches or more of the two largest trunks, without first obtaining a permit.

Damage includes but is not limited to:

- * burning
- * application of toxic substances
- * trenching
- * pruning or cutting
- * excavating
- * operation of machinery or equipment
- * paving
- * changing the natural grade

Section 22.56.2050: Oak Tree Permit
Regulations, Los Angeles County
Date of Adoption: September 13, 1988.

TYPES OF OAKS COMMONLY FOUND IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Many kinds of oak trees are native to Los Angeles County. A few of the more common oaks are shown on the back of this sheet, but all oak species are covered by the oak tree ordinance.

Older oak trees that have thrived under natural rainfall patterns of dry summers and wet winters often cannot tolerate the extra water of a garden setting. These trees must be treated with special care if they are to survive.

Oaks that have been planted into the landscape or have sprouted as volunteers tend to be more tolerant of watered landscapes. While these vigorous young trees may grow 1 1/2 to 4 feet a year in height under good conditions, they are not as long-lived as indigenous oaks.

***Quercus lobata* Valley Oak**

Large deciduous tree 60'-75' high, broadly spreading 50'-80' wide. Leaves are deep green 3"-4" long, paper-like texture with deep rounded lobes on the leaf edge. Tends to favor valley bottoms; for this reason the valley oak has disappeared from the landscape rapidly, impacted severely by agriculture and development.



Other Common Oaks:

<i>Quercus kelloggii</i>	California Black Oak
<i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>	Canyon Live Oak
<i>Quercus dumosa</i>	California Scrub Oak



***Quercus agrifolia* Coast Live Oak**

Large evergreen tree with a broad round shape and large limbs growing 30'-70' high and 35'-80' wide. Leaves are deep glossy green, 1"-3" long, spiny and holly-like with distinctly cupped or curled leaf edges. This is the most common oak seen around southern California's foothill communities.

***Quercus engelmannii* Mesa Oak**

Mesa oaks are indigenous to the foothills of the Sierra Madres. They grow 40 to 50 feet high with a semi-evergreen, dense, wide-spreading canopy. Leaves are thick, deep blue-green in color; varying in form and size to two inches.

