

# College of Coastal Georgia Tree Care Plan

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the College of Coastal Georgia (CCGA) Tree Care Plan is to recommend guidelines and goals that will allow the college to proactively manage and care for its campus trees and shrubs on the portions of campus managed as landscaped area. To provide protection and to make sure that removal of all trees on campus are conducted with proper considerations and adequate replacement. This plan does not set out guidelines for the management of forest ecosystems on the campus (i.e. backcampus, wooded areas).

## **Responsible authority/department**

Responsibility for carrying out the CCGA Tree Care Plan lies with the Facilities department, especially with the campus landscape team.

## **Campus Tree Advisory Committee**

The Campus Tree Advisory Committee is established for the purpose of making decisions regarding tree care policies and issues that may arise in relation to campus trees and shrubs.

The Campus Tree Advisory Committee is composed of:

- Assistant Director of Facilities and Plant Operations
- Campus Landscape Supervisor
- A minimum of two CCGA Faculty
- A minimum of two members from the community
- One member from CCGA Service Learning Department
- A minimum of one student, with up to three student positions possible

Replacement committee members will be made utilizing the College's standard process for appointing committee members from the faculty, staff, and students.

## **Committee Role and Responsibility**

The Campus Tree Advisory Committee will be responsible for maintaining, reviewing, and ensuring that the CCGA Tree Care Plan is being followed. Members shall appoint officials who will conduct the day by day business of the committee. Committee members are expected to actively participate and contribute in policy/guideline issues as well as research/information gathering that would aid in the campus tree care plan. The Committee will also move the college towards official status as a Tree Campus USA College.

### **Terms of Representatives**

Committee representatives selected by position at the college (Landscape Supervisor and Sustainability Coordinator) are ex officio on the committee. All other representatives serve for one year and may choose to extend their term yearly for up to three years.

### **Committee Schedule**

The Campus Tree Advisory Committee will meet at least once per semester to review the Campus Tree Care Plan, address tree issues, and plan for participation in the Tree Campus USA program.

### **Goals and Targets**

1. To complete a campus tree inventory by October 2016.
2. Create a list of memorial trees and their locations on campus to be available via the CCGA website.
3. Maintain the campus look to be naturalistic rather than straight lines of planted trees.
4. To be a Tree Campus USA college by March 2016.

### **Tree Care Policies**

#### **Plant Selection**

In selecting trees the campus landscape supervisor will give preference to native species where possible, maintain a diversity of species, avoid trees prone to insect and disease and structural problems, consider provenance of nursery stock for Glynn County and prohibit planting of invasive species. Plant material shall meet ANSI Z60.1-2014 American Standard for Nursery Stock. Balled and burlapped (B&B) stock is preferred to container-grown stock.

When selecting trees for planting the campus landscape Supervisor must take into account site characteristics including orientation, drainage, soil, use, and utility lines. Preference is given to trees with a caliper of one-and-one-half to two-and-one-half-inch (1.5 – 2.5”) caliper. Larger caliper stock may be considered if additional resources are provided to meet the extended duration for plant establishment.

### **Site Preparation**

When preparing the planting site, the planting hole must be dug not deeper than the rootball. If the tree is B&B the depth of rootball is measured from the top of the uppermost first order lateral root to the bottom of the rootball. If the tree is container grown the depth of rootball is measured from the uppermost first order lateral root to the bottom of the rootball, less three inches. The width of the hole shall be three times the diameter of the rootball. Planting details are available at: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/education/onlineResources/cadPlanningSpecifications.aspx#Planting>

The use of a tree spade when planting is desirable, and if used will override the above guidelines. The tree spade used on campus can dig to a width of six feet (6 ').

### **Setting the plant and Back-filling the Hole**

Elevation of plants is subject to the soil and slope of the planting site. Detail drawings and specifications are available at: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/education/onlineResources/cadPlanningSpecifications.aspx#Planting>  
Woody plants shall be set with uppermost first order lateral root exposed to half of its diameter at finish grade.

Once the plant is properly placed, all visible ropes and burlaps at the top One-third of the root ball or the top sixteen inches, whichever is greater, shall be removed. The top 8"-16" of the wire basket shall be removed once the rootball is stable in the planting hole.

If the plant is container grown, remove the outer lateral sides and bottom of the rootball to a depth of three inches (3") immediately before placing the plant in the planting hole and backfilling.

Backfill the planting hole with the existing soil removed to create the planting hole. The backfill soil should be watered in to remove large air pockets as the planting hole is filled.

Ensure the uppermost first order lateral root is exposed for half of its diameter. Apply mulch to a 4" depth but not touching the trunk, water the rootball and the planting area deeply.

Use of drip irrigation bags is highly recommended on trees, large shrubs and all tree spade planted plant material.

Stake newly planted trees. Two untreated 2x4 cross members placed over opposite sides of the root ball and anchored into the ground with 2x2 stakes are adequate for trees below 3" caliper. The number and dimensions of cross members and number of securing stakes shall increase as rootball diameter increases.

### **Transplanting**

Trees needing to be transplanted from a construction site may be transplanted with a tree spade if they are of 6" diameter or smaller and are of a high enough quality to be deemed valuable enough to transplant. This transplanting must be planned for during construction planning and must be incorporated into construction budgets.

A holding yard to shall be established for incoming or transplanted plant material. The holding yard shall have a water source adequate to meet irrigation demands for material being held until planting can proceed.

### **Fertilizing**

Grounds supervisors will determine if and when fertilization is necessary. Newly planted or transplanted trees shall not be provided nitrogen fertilizer until they have been installed for one full year. No fertilizer is likely necessary if trees are growing in lawn areas that are receiving fertilizer for turf.

## **Pruning**

### Newly Planted Trees

After planting, only broken and damaged branches may be pruned. Discretionary pruning to thin, enhance tree structure, and to remove broken, low, or diseased/dead limbs (often in house) will be performed with approval of CCGA's Grounds Supervisor. As much canopy as possible should be left on the tree at least through initial establishment.

### Established Trees

Tree maintenance performed shall meet ANSI A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations.

Tree works shall be conducted in compliance with ANSI Z133 Safety Standards for Tree Care Operations.

When pruning work is required the usual extent of pruning shall meet Class II Medium Pruning. An occasional undesirable branch up to one inch in diameter may be retained when it is not practical to access the branch.

## **Landscaping**

In making landscaping decisions, low maintenance plants are preferred where possible and are chosen based on site conditions, not solely because they are native.

## **Memorial / Dedication Trees**

Individuals or groups wishing to donate memorial or dedication trees to CCGA work through the office of Institutional Advancement. Institutional Advancement, in consultation with the campus Tree Advisory Committee will guide individuals as to the best use of their gift in following with guidelines set out in the CCGA Tree Care Plan.

## **Tree Maintenance and Removal**

### **Preventive Maintenance Pruning**

Services for removing dead limbs or sections of trees are hired as funds become available to do so. Grounds staff maintains an awareness of trees and their pruning needs. Campus users may also report pruning needs to the grounds staff.

### **Mulching**

Trees should be mulched to the dripline to a depth of six inches loose to provide a four inch settled mulch cover. The mulch depth should be restored to a four inch settled depth annually using tree-source products (ex. Leaves, chipped branches, composted wood chips). No mulch containing grasses shall be applied to trees.

### **Fallen Limb Removal**

If a tree limb falls on campus, anyone may contact the grounds department to request its removal. Grounds staff will respond promptly to requests and will also manage limb removal as needed regardless of requests.

### **Hazard and Emergency**

In the case of a tree limb near an electrical line, the grounds department will hire a removal service. If a hazardous tree or limb is not near an electrical line, the grounds department will remove the limb/tree in house. Hazardous trees may be reported to the grounds department at any time.

### **Stump Grinding**

Whenever a tree is removed it is desirable for the stump to be ground out. This service is hired locally when needed.

### **Managing for Catastrophic Events**

In a catastrophic event the grounds crew will work to clear roads first, then critical buildings, the dining hall, the dorms, administration buildings and library, in that order, as soon as possible.

## **Protection and Preservation**

### **Protection zones**

When planning construction on campus, trees that are to be preserved must have a tree protection fence placed around them prior to starting construction. The tree protection fence must be inspected and approved by CCGA's landscape Supervisor prior to the start of construction. The formula for determining the minimum area the tree protection fence encloses is as follows:

$1.5 \times \text{trunk diameter at breast height (in inches)} = \text{radius from trunk in feet.}$

The fence must be one of the following types: chain link, standard plastic construction fencing.

## **New Building or Facility Construction**

All campus development needs should be planned with the aim of preserving CCGA's campus trees wherever possible. Trees that must be removed or transplanted must be shown on the site plan and must be compensated as described here. The total inches in diameter lost should be made up with same number of diameter inches in new or transplanted trees. If removing a tree, the construction project must provide the tree fund with adequate compensation to cover the cost of the tree and the labor to plant it and maintain it through establishment at current market value. The compensation plan must be approved by the Director of Facilities prior to the start of construction. This should be incorporated into the initial planning of the construction budget. The compensation must be used from the tree fund on the campus, preferably within one year of completion of facility construction.

### **Soil Compaction Prevention**

Soil compaction can damage tree roots and can make soil unfit for landscaping. All construction projects involving heavy equipment must use a heavy-duty construction mat over soil zones within the construction site to prevent compaction.

### **Design Requirements**

Follow LEED Landscaping guidelines once they become available. Until such time, please use resources available through the Sustainable Sites Initiative at [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org).

### **Tree Damage Assessment**

The Landscape Supervisor and/or the Director of Plant Operations, shall assess any damaged tree on campus. The designated evaluator shall determine action needed (pruning, removal, treatment, etc.) and shall proceed as necessary. Should a tree be damaged purposefully by a campus user, said person shall be required to work with the Campus Tree Advisory Committee to determine appropriate fines or behavioral change in order to fix the damage or replace the tree.

### **Prohibited Practices**

1. Tree topping, i.e. cutting the top of a tree off for aesthetics or other reasons, is never allowable.
2. Volcano mulching (mounding of mulch up around the trunk of the tree) is prohibited. Mulch should be a donut shape (leave space between the trunk and the mulch)
3. Planting trees low- sunken down in the hole. Never plant the tree lower than the hole dug.
4. Tree paint used for painting tree wounds is prohibited.
5. The campus Landscape Supervisor must approve all trees planted in managed landscape areas. The planting of un-approved trees is prohibited.
6. All pruning must be performed by the grounds department or with the approval of the grounds department. Unapproved pruning is prohibited.
7. It is prohibited on the campus of CCGA to destroy any

tree, shrub, or other form of landscaping.

## **Definitions**

Diameter - The thickness or measurement around the main stem of a young tree or sapling as measured at six (6") inches above ground level. This measurement is used for nursery-grown trees having a thickness of four inches or less.

Dead wooding - The act of removing dead limbs or areas of a tree.

Invasive species - Any non-native species with known adverse effects on the local habitat

Native tree - Any naturally occurring tree species that is indigenous to the region.

Tree topping - The act of removing the upper portion of a tree, a harmful practice.

Canopy Tree - A tree that will grow to a mature height of at least 40 feet with a spread of at least 30 feet.

## **Communication Strategy**

The tree care plan shall be available on the college website under sustainability, and any revisions or updates to the policy shall be communicated to the campus via e-mail, college newspaper, and digital signage. Additionally, press release shall be made to the local media through the office of public affairs.

## **For new buildings or renovations**

It will be the responsibility of the college's construction project manager and facilities director to ensure all contractors, architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, and firms hired to aid in the design and construction of a new building have a copy of the campus Tree Care Plan well before design and construction begins and are aware of their responsibility to act in accordance with the plan.