

in the garden *by Stephen and Kristin Pategas*



STEPHEN & KRISTIN PATEGAS

Free Tree - What To Do?

The offer of a free tree is ripe with opportunities and potential. Imagine the future shade on the house during the many months of hot summer days, lower power bills, a shaded hammock, wildlife habitat, absorption of carbon dioxide, higher property values, and free leaf mulch. Now imagine a tree trunk pressed against the roof over-

hang with limbs on the shingles, a cracked foundation, fees for tree removal and house repairs, a shaded swimming pool, or struggling roses and vegetables seeking sunlight. We see the good and the bad all of the time.



This is a good distance for a live oak. No stress here!



As an accent even the ligustrum tree needs proper siting.



The proper tree distance may minimize damage to a structure when a hurricane does this.

It is possible to have the positive without the negative with a bit of research and planning. Before bringing home a new sapling think about where it will fit into your garden. Are you shade-coverage poor or is there a tree reaching the end of its lifespan? If so then move onto the next step - what type of tree will it mature into and will the allotted space in the garden be appropriate? If the freebie is a good choice grab it.

Canopy/shade trees such as oaks, bald cypress, winged elms, and

magnolias may reach 60 to 80 feet in height. Plant these away from the house at about one-half of their potential height. Understory/accents including trumpet/tabebuia, ligustrum, crape myrtle, and yaupon trees will rarely overwhelm a house. They tuck into smaller spaces and the ones that tolerate some shade will fit in between shade trees. Just be aware of their spread.

In many communities a tree becomes protected once it reaches a certain trunk diameter. The trunks for existing trees are measured at diameter at breast height (DBH) at 54" above the grade. However, for replacement trees the measurement for under 4" diameter trunks is taken at 6" above

grade and for 4" or greater diameter at a 12" height. So monitor the growing tree and if it is in the wrong place, is freezable, or in poor health, remove it before there are regulatory issues. The right tree growing to maturity in the right place is a wonderful thing.

Abbreviated Summary of Residential Property Tree Removal Requirements:

Maitland: Any canopy tree (taller than 30 feet at maturity and at least 2/3 the height of the tree in width) living or dead with a trunk diameter of 10" DBH requires a permit for removal. Shoreline trees are protected at 4" DBH. Removal of dead trees and those on the invasive species list require a free permit. Replacement, if required (less than 30% shade coverage of remaining trees) is a minimum of one 3" diameter tree. Call 407.539.3973.

Orlando: Any tree or palm living or dead with a trunk diameter of 4" DBH requires a permit for removal. Replacement, if required (depends upon shade coverage of remaining trees) may be a 3" diameter tree. Call 407.246.2283.

Winter Park: Most tree species (unless on exempt list) living or dead are protected if they are 9" or greater DBH. Replacement trees start at 3" diameter. Newly planted trees may also be tree banked for future replacement use. Call 407.599.3321. ■

Kristin and Stephen Pategas design landscapes and garden at their home and business Hortus Oasis in Winter Park. Contact them at garden@hortusoasis.com or visit www.hortusoasis.com and www.pategaionplants.com.

All photography by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis