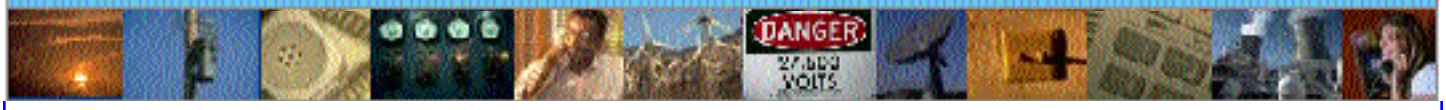
A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS

CUSTOMER FACTS



All About Trees and Power Lines

Trees provide beauty, shade, habitat for wildlife, help conserve soil and water and act as wind, noise and visual buffers. Trees in communities are an asset and must be managed to maintain their health and prevent problems. Reliable electric service is also an integral part of our lives. Electric utilities strive to provide safe and reliable electric service. To achieve these goals they must manage trees near their power lines.

Why is it necessary for electric utilities to manage trees near power lines?

First and foremost is public safety. Every year in Texas, people are injured or even killed when they climb or prune trees near power lines. High-voltage lines are not insulated, and direct contact usually results in fatal electrocution. A tree contacting a power line can also become energized, injuring someone touching the tree. Children should never climb or play in trees near power lines. Trees contacting power lines can also start fires, endangering lives and property.

Many trees are located too close to power lines. Power outages can occur when trees grow into or fall on power lines. Service interruptions caused by trees are more than an inconvenience; they can endanger life through the failure of life support systems, fire alarms and traffic signals. Power outages can also be very costly, especially to commercial and industrial customers.

How do electric utilities manage trees near power lines?

Electric utilities routinely require access to inspect trees near their lines and schedule periodic maintenance. The utility prunes trees that interfere with its power lines and may even need to completely remove a tree because of its condition. When pruning trees, the utility determines the required distance based on the voltage of the power line and the type of tree. Some trees need to be pruned more than others to prevent problems. According to the American National Standards Institute A300 Pruning Standards most utilities hire professionals that prune trees. These techniques utilize natural or directional pruning methods, which direct the growth of trees away from the lines. It also helps ensure the long-term health of the tree.

Can I prune my own trees near the power lines or hire someone?

NO! By Texas law (Health & Safety Code, Chapter 752), only professionals who are authorized by the local utility are allowed to prune or remove trees closer than ten feet to high voltage power lines. These professionals have been properly trained and equipped to do so. Serious injury and even death can occur when untrained persons or homeowners attempt to prune trees closer than ten feet to high voltage power lines. Call your local utility for assistance.

What trees can be planted near power lines?

Texas has a wide variety of low-growing trees that can be planted near power lines. As a rule, trees planted near power lines should have a mature height of less than 25 feet. Taller growing trees must be planted further away to prevent future problems. Homeowners should evaluate their trees near power lines and help ensure that they will not reach heights that will interfere with electric service. Most electric utilities have tree-planting booklets available to their customers that give advice on types of trees to plant. Remember, before you plant a tree, look up for power lines and call the “Call Before You Dig” toll-free line at 1-800-344-8377 to locate any buried lines.

Let Us Assist You

QUESTIONS:

Call: 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120 (TTY 512-936-7136)

Visit: www.puc.state.tx.us

Email: customer@puc.state.tx.us

COMPLAINTS:

Call: 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120 (TTY 512-936-7136)

Write: PUC - Customer Protection
P.O. Box 13326
Austin, TX 78711-3326

Fax: 1-512-936-7003

Online: www.puc.state.tx.us/ocp

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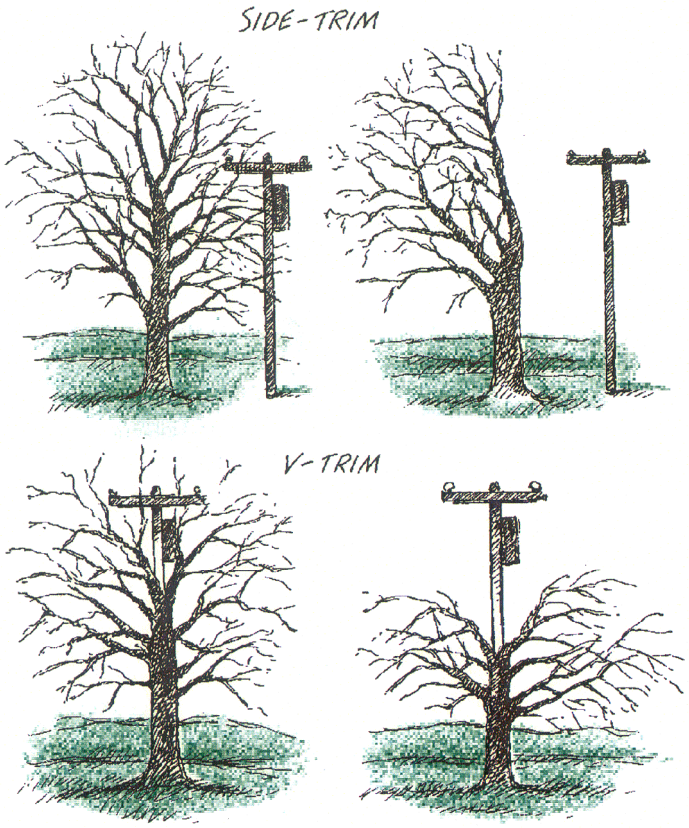
LOW GROWING TREES

Below is a list of low growing trees that can be planted adjacent to overhead power lines. Generally these trees will have a mature height of less than 25 feet. Contact your local tree nursery for recommendations and availability.

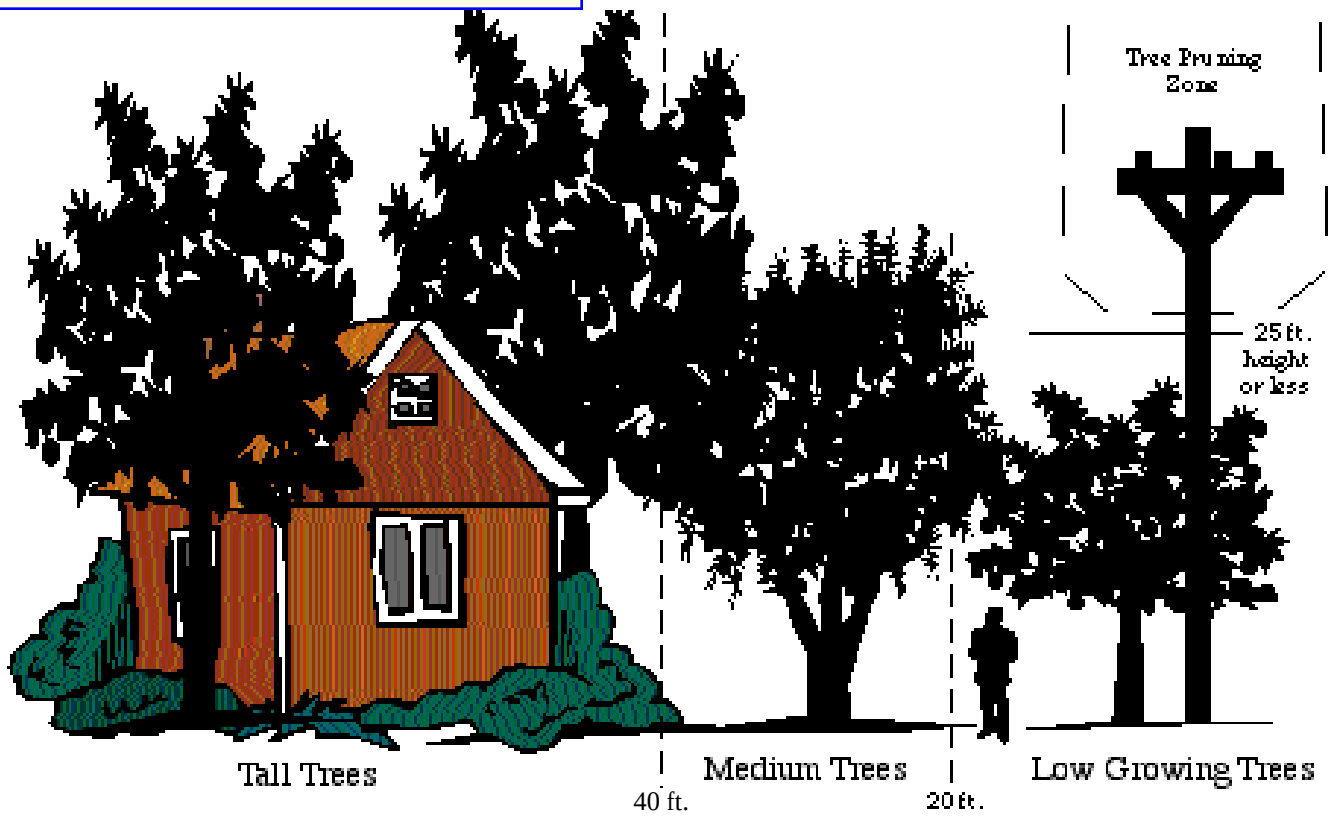
1. Flowering Dogwood
2. Mexican Plum
3. Dwarf Crapemyrtle
4. Crabapple
5. Washington Hawthorn
6. Desert Willow
7. Redbud
8. Japanese Black Pine
9. Yaupon Holly
10. Wax Myrtle
11. Japanese Maple
12. Flameleaf Sumac
13. Fringe Tree
14. Texas Mountain Laurel
15. Carolina Buckthorn
16. Mexican Buckeye
17. Possumhaw Holly
18. Texas Madrone
19. Saucer Magnolia
20. Purple-leaf Plum

Directional Pruning Methods For Tall Trees Growing Too Close To Power Lines



BEFORE PRUNING

AFTER PRUNING



Plant taller trees away from overhead power lines.

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