

Windings Homeowners Association (WHOA)

Tree Management Policy Statement

18 January 2018

Background:

The goal of the Windings Homeowners Association Board and its Environmental Committee is to oversee the management of trees and our natural environment in a sustainable and harmonious manner. This document includes guidelines for trees on private property, and maintained common areas (owned or controlled by WHOA).

Policy Statement:

Trees in the Windings are considered part of our architectural infrastructure and generally shall not be removed except for safety reasons. The WHOA Board requires property owners to request and obtain permission to remove trees larger than 6 inches in diameter. No trees are to be removed without first obtaining permission from the designated representative of the Board.

Reason for Policy:

WHOA seeks to preserve the woodland character of the Windings, provide a sustainable and native habitat, and execute good management practices. Unsafe, damaged, or diseased trees are appropriate for prudent removal.

Procedures:

1. No tree with a diameter of 6” or greater is to be removed without permission.
2. Permission must first be obtained from the designated representative of the Board before any tree removal is undertaken. The designated representative has a period of 21 days in which to review and take action on requests. Every effort will be made to expedite the review process, especially in situations with safety implications.
3. Any tree removed is to be replaced with a sapling or larger tree on homeowner property or on approved Windings common area, ideally with a replacement from the WHOA list of preferred trees.
4. A “Tree Guidelines” document will be developed and provided to all homeowners with recommendations for care of trees and preferred replacement trees.

Additional Information

Woodland Communities and The Windings

19 December 2017

You and I live in a special place. Certainly, the Windings is special in part because of friendly neighbors, diverse house styles, and such amenities as a tennis court, swimming pool, and sledding hill. More than that, however, The Windings is special because of its woodland setting. Many of us moved here because we loved the trees that surround our homes.

The Windings is set in what ecologists call a “woodland community, which dates back thousands of years. After the half-mile thick glaciers that covered Illinois from Chicago to Shelbyville melted about 13,000 years ago, prairies, savannahs, woodlands and forests began to develop here—each with its special combinations of plants and animals. In the centuries before Illinois was settled, the woodland community in which The Windings is located consisted of large numbers of white oak, red oak, bur oak, shagbark hickory, and black walnut trees. Basswood, black maple, and hackberry trees, among others, joined the oaks and hickories in small numbers. Woodland grasses and flowers covered the woodland floor. From time-to-time, fire raced through these woodlands and killed fire sensitive trees, such as ash, box elder, cottonwood and sugar maples, leaving the predominate oaks and hickories we still see today. This is the scene Illinois pioneers saw when they first arrived.

The arrival of settlers dramatically changed the woodland communities, and in some cases decimated them. First, trees were cut down for homes and fuel, and woodlands were turned into grazing lands and farmsteads. Second, fire was suppressed, which allowed buckthorn and other invasive plants to flourish. The resulting shade that these shrubs produced greatly reduced the ability of acorns to germinate and as a result, oaks lost their ability to regenerate. Third, pioneers introduced new tree varieties that they brought with them from elsewhere. Later, as The Windings was developed, homeowners, unaware of the prize nature of a woodland community, planted non-native trees that were inexpensively priced or inappropriately recommended at local garden centers. As a result, trees such as weeping willow, cottonwood, and Colorado blue spruce found their way into our tree inventory, changing its function and appearance. Today we have only a tiny fragment of the woodland communities that once flourished in Northern Illinois and elsewhere.

Look around you. If you are lucky, you have oak trees, hickories or walnuts growing on your property or growing nearby. You’ll also find these trees growing in our common areas. Experts estimate the age of our larger oaks to be 75-100 years, and a few pre-settlement oaks may be 200 years or older. And they are dying. If you walk through The Windings today, you will see numerous tree skeletons—trees still standing upright that have died due to age, infestation or changes in the landscape that we homeowners have brought into effect. And without trees’ ability to replace themselves, we are slowly losing our thousands-of-years-old legacy and a characteristic that makes The Windings so very special.

Fortunately, the end of our story hasn’t been written. We can take action to conserve and restore our natural heritage, and in this series of articles you will learn what steps you can take to restore the health and appearance of the woodland community that surrounds The Windings subdivision. You will learn about the value of removing buckthorn and honeysuckle from your yard and the importance of planting oak and hickory trees in open spaces. In the years ahead we can make the Windings that we pass on to the next generation healthier and even more beautiful and special than it is today.

(Doug D. and WHOA Environmental Committee 8/14/2017)

The Benefits of Trees

19 December 2017

There is so much written on this topic. We are so lucky to live in The Windings. Following is a recap of what I consider to be the Top 10 Benefits of Trees, but there are many more.

1. **Trees help us relax and feel better.** Studies have shown that a walk in the woods or just viewing trees from a window can improve moods and lower blood pressure. People living in areas with abundant greenery tend to be more physically active and therefore healthier.
2. **Trees increase property values.** Well planted homesites and neighborhoods can raise the value of our homes. Homes in neighborhoods with mature trees can sell for 10-15% more than homes in neighborhoods without trees. A single large front yard tree can add 1% to a home's sales price.
3. **Trees block things.** They can be planted to screen unsightly views or muffle sounds from streets. The canopy that trees provide can filter dust, reduce wind and shield our homes from the glare of sunshine.
4. **Trees conserve energy.** The shade from a large tree can reduce the temperature around your house during the summer and lower air conditioning costs. During our cold winter months, trees and shrubs that block winter winds can reduce heating bills.
5. **Trees clean the air we breathe.** Large trees with many leaves capture pollution such as carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxides. The more trees we have the better air quality we enjoy.
6. **Trees treat water pollution.** The roots from trees help to collect contaminants that seep through the soil. We have our trees in The Windings to thank for the quality of water in the creek and pond in the common areas.
7. **Trees help handle storm runoff and reduce flooding.** Trees absorb and hold an enormous amount of water that would otherwise be streaming down our streets and yards. Their preservation greatly affects stormwater management by slowing runoff and holding soil in place.
8. **Trees provide a canopy and habitat for wildlife.** We are so fortunate to share our community with such a wonderful assortment of birds and animals. Our trees make this possible by providing food, shelter, and places for nesting and mating. By saving and nurturing our trees we are also saving the animals they shelter.
9. **Trees help reduce the effects of climate change.** Over a year, a mature tree absorbs 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releases oxygen in exchange. An acre of mature trees can absorb as much carbon dioxide produced by a car driven 26,000 miles.
10. **Trees surround us in beauty.** Who among us doesn't enjoy the beauty we live in? The trails, our pond, our sled hill, our forest provide us with beauty from spring budding and flowering through the spectacular fall color displays and then a winter wonderland. Without our trees our neighborhood would be barren and boring.

Sharon V. November 2017 - Excuse me now while I go hug a tree.

WHOA Recommendations for Replacement Trees

Large Native Trees for Landscaping

19 December 2017

White oak (*Quercus alba*)

White oak is the Illinois state tree. It is the only oak of the white oak group that has russet red fall color. In youth, the leaves tend to persist over the winter. As the tree ages, the leaves fall off in autumn. Grows in sand and clay but never in very wet sites. Most of our oaks are intolerant of shade, but White Oak is mildly shade-tolerant, needing only 3-4 hours of sun daily. Somewhat slower growing (18") than others in the White Oak family.

Size Range: Large tree. Mature height, 50-80', 50' wide.

Light Exposure: Full sun, though can tolerate shade (3-4 hours of sun a day).

Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*)

Swamp white oak is a striking tree with attractive peeling bark, especially on young trees. The lustrous, lobed leaves have a two-tone appearance, dark green on top with a silvery-white underside. Fall color is an orange-gold to yellow in mid-autumn. An excellent shade tree for any landscape. Can handle wet areas with poor drainage, and will tolerate drought conditions.

Size Range: Large tree. Mature height, 50-60', 50-60' wide.

Light Exposure: Full sun.

Chinkapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*)

Chinkapin oak is native to the Midwest, where it is often found as a specimen planting or as a grouping of tree for parks and large areas. Chinkapin oaks perform well in alkaline soils. Young trees retain a pyramidal to oval habit with a pale gray, scaly ridged central trunk. As trees age, the crown becomes more rounded. Growth is faster than most oaks.

Size Range: Medium size white oak, typically grows 40-60'.

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily)

Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)

Red Oak is one of the most shade tolerant of the oaks, making it a good choice to grow under existing trees. A few hours of sun per day is all it needs to grow. It does well in good garden soil and light shade. Fall color is an outstanding red. It is one of the faster growing oaks for the home landscape.

Size Range: Large tree (50-80' x 40-50')

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily) to Partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily)

Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)

Illinois is the prairie state and Bur Oak is the prairie oak. The stately bur oak is a great choice as a shade tree and for specimen plantings spacious yards, and other large areas. Its massive trunk has gray to brown furrowed bark and its branches bear lustrous dark green leaves that turn yellow-brown in fall. Large acorns with fringed caps attract birds and small mammals. One of the fastest growing oaks, growing as much as 30 inches per year.

Size Range: Large tree (50-80')

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hours of direct light daily)

Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*)

Black Oak tends to be found on well-drained sites such as sand or gravel. The leaves are very similar to Red Oak, but fall color can be red but usually is a tan-brown. Leaves do not persist through winter. Ultimate size is slightly smaller than Red Oak.

Size Range: Large tree (40-70')

Light Exposure: Full Sun

Shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*)

Plant a shagbark hickory in a large landscape for excellent shade. This Midwest native is named for its bark, which peels away in large, flat, curving plates, giving the tree a shaggy appearance. As a member of the walnut family, the hickory produces edible nuts.

Size Range: Large tree (40-80')

Light Exposure: Full sun to part shade.

American basswood, or linden (*Tilia americana*)

American basswood (or Linden) is often used as a specimen or dense shade tree. Its heart-shaped leaves and fragrant flowers in June make it especially attractive for people, while songbirds and blue jays are attracted to its seeds and use the tree for shelter. Basswood is a very tall slender tree under normal circumstances but if the tree is stressed it will tend to sucker from the base and form a multi-trunked plant.

Size Range: Large narrow tree, 50-8' by 30;

Light Exposure: Full sun to partial shade.

Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*)

Black Maple is a very close cousin to Sugar Maple (or may now be a subspecies of sugar maple). The plant appears to be more tolerant of moist sites, and fall color tends to be more yellow than sugar maple. It is very shade-tolerant and, yes, you can make maple syrup from this plant.

Size Range: Large tree (40-75')

Light Exposure: Full sun to full shade.

WHOA Recommendations
Understory Trees
19 December 2017

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* varieties)

Also known as: Allegheny serviceberry, smooth shadbush, Juneberry,
Serviceberries are small native understory tree with four-season interest. The early white spring flowers, small berries in summer (attractive to many birds), excellent fall color, and striking gray bark make it a lovely specimen for any landscape.

Size Range: Small tree (15-25 feet);

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hours daily) to partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily)

American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)

Also known as: Blue beech, musclewood

The American hornbeam is a native forest understory tree in the Chicago area, making it useful for shady landscapes and naturalized or woodland gardens. New leaves emerge reddish-purple, changing to dark green, then turn yellow to orange-red in the fall, offering a kaleidoscope of color throughout the year.

Size Range: Medium tree (25-40 feet), Small tree (15-25 feet); **Light Exposure:** Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily), Partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily), Full shade (4 hrs. or less of light daily);

Common witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Also known as: Fall witch hazel, Fall-blooming witch hazel

The yellow, strap-like flowers of this native shrub are among the last blooms to appear in fall, but are often hidden by the leaves. Common witch-hazel is a large shrub with a picturesque irregular branching habit that naturally grows along woodland edges. The fruit capsules mature a year after flowering, splitting open to expel seeds that are attractive to birds. Tolerant of road salt and clay soil, this is a great specimen plant, or for naturalized landscape.

Size Range: Small or compact tree (10-25 feet) or Large shrub (more than 8 feet)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light), to Full shade (4 hrs. or less of light daily);

Crabapple cultivars (*Malus*)

Also known as: crabapple, flowering crab, flowering crabapple

Crabapples are a varied and diverse group. They include several species, hybrids, and cultivated varieties (cultivars). The mature size of the plant should be considered in your selection, as should the cultivar's disease resistance in relationship to its site (dry versus wet, for example).

Size Range: Compact to Medium tree (10-40 feet), Large shrub (more than 8 feet)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily)

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Also known as: redbud, eastern redbud

In April and May, many neighborhoods are brightened by the purplish-pink flowers lining the black branches of redbuds before their leaves open. This Chicago native plant, evolved in the understory of forests.

Size Range: Medium to small tree (15-40 feet)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily), Partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily)

Ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*)

Also known as: ironwood, American or Eastern hop-hornbeam

Ironwood is a tough understory tree with beautiful birch-like leaves, grayish-brown flaky bark, fine-textured drooping branches, and attractive hop-like fruits. Ironwood is considered one of Illinois' toughest native hardwoods and is not only ornamental but resistant to many disease and insect problems. Excellent for naturalized landscapes.

Size Range: Medium to Large tree (25-40 or more feet)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily), Partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily);

Pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*)

Also known as: pagoda dogwood, alternate-leaved dogwood

Pagoda dogwood is an excellent native plant for the four season garden. The unique horizontal branching pattern has a distinct tiered habit, often catching snow in the winter. Clusters of white flowers show up in spring, dark green foliage turns a beautiful burgundy-red in fall, and blue-black berries attract many birds.

Size Range: Compact to small tree (10-25 feet), Large shrub (more than 8 feet)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily), Partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily)

Gray Dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*)

Also known as: paniced dogwood

Gray dogwood is a very adaptable, native shrub that is excellent for naturalizing, especially in difficult sites, such as pond and stream banks. Although its suckering, spreading habit makes it impractical for formal plantings, good for a shrub border and useful as a mass planting. Creamy white clusters of flowers in May are followed by white berries in late summer that are quickly eaten by birds.

Size Range: Large shrub (over 8' tall)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily to full shade (less than 4 hours direct light)

Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus serotina*)

Also known as: red twigged dogwood

Red-osier dogwood is a large erect shrub best suited where the background, such as evergreens, will show off the dark red winter stems. Besides attractive, red stems in the winter, red-osier dogwood has yellowish-white flowers that appear in late May to early June and bluish-white fruit borne in late summer.

Size Range: Medium to Large shrub (5' to over 8' tall)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily to partial sun/shade (4-6 hours direct light)

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Also known as: redbud, eastern redbud

In April and May, many neighborhoods are brightened by the purplish-pink flowers lining the black branches of redbuds before their leaves open. This Chicago native plant, evolved in the understory of forests.

Size Range: Medium to small tree (15-40 feet)

Light Exposure: Full sun (6 hrs. direct light daily), Partial sun/shade (4-6 hrs. light daily)