



Oak Wilt Ordinance Revision Simplifies Pruning Schedule

It's official! There are no longer any temperature restrictions on pruning oaks in Lakeway. An amendment to the Diseased Tree Ordinance has greatly simplified the rules for pruning oaks.

Previously the Diseased Tree Ordinance prohibited pruning oaks when temperatures were mild (between 45 and 90 degrees). Oak pruning was restricted to very cold or very hot days. This schedule made it difficult for homeowners and tree trimmers to schedule tree maintenance in advance.

The January 2009 Amendment to the Diseased Tree Ordinance eliminated temperature restrictions and replaced them with a calendar-based schedule:

- **February 1 – June 30:** Oak pruning prohibited except where absolutely necessary for safety
- **July 1 – January 31:** Oak pruning permitted at all times regardless of temperature

As always, pruning seal must be applied within ten minutes to all cuts of all sizes on oaks, regardless of month or season. Ensuring that all fresh pruning wounds are sealed immediately is the single best measure to protect oaks from oak wilt infection.

The edict “Never prune February through June” is strictly enforced, but exceptions may be made to protect the safety of people or property. Here are examples of urgent situations where it’s best not to wait:

- Broken or decayed branches that could fall or break anytime
- Jagged breaks that need to be cut smooth and sealed to prevent oak wilt infection
- Oak limbs rubbing on a building

- Low hanging limbs extending into the street that could damage or be damaged by vehicles
- Limbs that must be cut for equipment clearance on a construction site

Call the Lakeway City Forester at 608-9722 if you have an urgent pruning issue that can’t wait until July. Examples of non-emergency pruning that should be postponed include:

- All aesthetic pruning or “clean-up”
- Branch sprout removal
- Ball moss removal
- Branches that block views
- Limbs close to but not touching the roof
- Small dead branches that are unlikely to break or damage anything if they fall

The safest time to prune oaks is during the winter months of November, December and January when the insect carriers of the oak wilt fungus are mostly dormant. Aesthetic oak pruning should be scheduled during this period if possible.

The second best time to prune oaks is in July and August when scorching summer temperatures cause the disease-causing fungal spores to dry up. September and October carry a slightly higher risk level, but research has indicated that the insect carriers are less likely to transport viable fungal spores at this time.

For more information on oak wilt in Lakeway, visit the Lakeway City Forester’s web page at lakeway-tx.gov/forester. Feel free to call or email the City Forester with any questions about oak wilt in Lakeway or the Diseased Tree Ordinance at 608-9722 or forester@lakeway-tx.gov.