

all plantings and grass areas.  
-Sprinkler systems shall be automatically operated and designed to automatically shut off when raining.

### **15) How can I conserve water?**

-Preserve existing native plants  
-Use drought resistant plants  
-Use shade trees  
-Limit amounts of lawn grass areas  
-Collect rainwater for watering plants  
-Follow the watering restrictions in effect in Lake Worth

### **16) What are the requirements for shrubs and hedges?**

-They must be a minimum 2' in height when planted.  
-Shrubs centers must be placed no further than 2' apart with branches touching when planted.  
-Hedges must form a solid visual screen within 1 year after planting.  
-Hedges must attain a height of 36" except when a safe sight distance requires 30" height. - Section 23.21.08.06 G

### **17) What are the minimum landscape requirements?**

-1 shade tree for every 2500 sq. feet of lot area, at least 1 shade tree must be in the front yard.  
-Shrubs must be installed along the foundation of each side of the residence that faces a street or alley.  
-A minimum of 25% of the lot must be planted with grass, living ground cover or other approved landscape materials.  
-No more than 80% of the planting area shall be lawn grass.

-A minimum of 20% of the planting area shall be trees, shrubs and living ground cover.  
- Sections 23.21.08.09,  
- Section 23.21.08.06 H.

### **18) Must I protect trees during construction?**

-Yes, do not place material, machinery or temporary soil under the tree canopy, including the outer edge.  
- Erect protective barriers around all trees to be preserved.  
- Do not attach wires except protective guidelines to preserved trees  
-Trees that are damaged and deemed unsalvageable must be replaced.  
- Section 23.21.13.09 (Tree Preservation Ordinance)

### **19) How do I look up the Landscape Regulations online?**

-Go to the Lake Worth city homepage ([www.lakeworth.org](http://www.lakeworth.org)), scroll down to "Ordinances" and click. When the "Municode.com" page comes up, type "landscape regulations" in the search area at the top left of the page, and click "search" Then click on "Article XXI Supplemental Regulations". Scroll down to 23.21.08.00. Always refer to the specific ordinance section to answer your question. You can type in any word you are searching for in the "refine your search" field to find it in the regulations.

-The Tree Preservation Ordinance is Section 23.21.13.00



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

## **FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOME OWNERS**

## **ON THE**

## **LANDSCAPE REGULATIONS SECTION 23.21.08.00**

This document is meant only as a quick reference, and is not intended to be a final source of detailed ordinance requirements. Ordinances can be changed at any time.

Lake Worth City Tree Board  
7 North Dixie Highway, Lake Worth,  
Florida. 33460

Where the Tropics Begin  
[www.lakeworth.org](http://www.lakeworth.org)

Topics in the Tropics  
Information Line - 561-586-1791

**1) Do I need a permit to cut down a tree in my yard?**

-Yes, for a tree with a diameter of 3 inches or more (measured at 4 1/2' off the ground.) If the tree is dead or diseased, the permit fee will be waived. - Section 23.21.08.04

**2) Where do I get the permit?**

-Online at [www.lakeworth.org](http://www.lakeworth.org) > city departments > building department > permits needed. Or, the Building and Zoning Dept. City Hall, 7 North Dixie Highway.

**3) Are there penalties for cutting down trees without a permit?**

-Yes, tree replacement and a possible fine. Section 23.21.13.00 (Tree Preservation)

**4) Why do I need a permit to remove a tree in my own yard?**

-The amount of tree canopy in our city affects everyone. Our neighborhoods would suffer if everyone could cut their trees down. Trees make our neighborhoods more livable, add value to our homes, reduce air conditioning costs, and help create pride in our community.

**5) Why is hat racking of trees illegal?**

-Hat racking stresses the tree. Makes it susceptible to pests and disease, and creates a solid ball of branches which make the tree much more likely to be blown over in a storm. Instead, the canopy should be thinned to allow wind to pass through the branches. - Section 23.21.08.03 Definitions

**6) Am I required to have a tree in my yard?**

-Yes, you are required to have 1 shade tree for every 2500 sq. feet of lot area, and at

least 1 shade tree must be in the front yard.  
- Section 23.21.08.09 A. 1.

**7) What is the definition of a shade tree?**

When mature:  
-Species having a canopy greater than 20 ft. Trees can be grouped to give 20 ft canopy.  
When planted:  
-At least 12' in height with a minimum of 4' single straight trunk.  
-3" minimum trunk diameter measured at 4 1/2' above ground level.  
-6' canopy spread.  
- Section 23.21.08.06 E

**8) Must the trees and plantings be native?**

-Yes, a minimum of fifty (50) percent of all required trees and twenty-five (25) percent of all other required plants must be native.  
- Section 23.21.08.05 E

**9) Can palm trees be used as shade trees?**

- Yes, 1 coconut, date or royal palm of qualifying size equal 1 shade tree.  
-All other qualifying palms must be grouped together to form a minimum 15' crown when mature to equal a shade tree.  
-Palm trees cannot be used as replacement for shade trees if you remove a shade tree.  
-For more specific information,  
-See Section 23.21.08.06 F and 23.21.13.04 Definitions Replacement Tree

**10) Do my palms need a "hurricane cut"?**

-No, there is no such thing as a hurricane cut. Palm fronds should not be removed until they are brown, and never trimmed above the "3:00 o'clock" and "9:00 o'clock" position. Palms survive storms well without trimming.

**11) Do I need a permit to landscape my yard?**

-Yes, prior to the clearing of any real property of vegetation, or prior to new development, a permit is needed. If you have questions about whether you need a permit for landscaping, contact the City Horticulturist at 586-1677.  
- Section 23.21.08.04

**12) Do I have to have a lawn in my front yard?**

-No, living ground covers may be used in lieu of grass, if they have a finished appearance. Many ground covers use less water than grass, and natives are available and preferable. A mix of trees, shrubs, mulches and ground covers are encouraged. No more than 80% of the pervious lot area shall be planted with grass.- Section 23.21.08.06 H

**13) What about using mulch?**

-Organic mulches in conjunction with ground covers should be used to reduce turf (lawn) areas. Cypress mulch is discouraged. An environmentally friendly alternative is maleleuca mulch from trees eradicated in Florida.  
-Apply mulch to a minimum depth of 3".  
-No more than 25% of the front or side yards may be covered only with mulch that has no living plant materials. - Section 23.21.08.06 A, K

**14) Is an irrigation system required?**

-Existing single family homes, existing plant communities, or newly installed native plant areas may use hand watering or mobile sprinkler systems under certain circumstances.- Section 23.21.08.07  
-Irrigation sprinkler systems are required for all newly constructed homes, and must water