Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

December 1, 2009

Felix Obamogie
2278 Navarro Avenue
Altadena, CA 91001

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

REGARDING: **PROJECT NUMBER R2006-01122-(5)**
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 200800036
3323 MARENGO AVE, ALTADENA (APN NO. 5833-033-006)

Dear Applicant:

Hearing Officer, Dennis Slavin, by his action of December 1, 2009, **APPROVED** the above described Oak Tree Permit to authorize three oak tree encroachments for the construction of a new single-family residence.

The applicant or **ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSON** may **APPEAL** the Hearing Officer's decision to the Regional Planning Commission at the office of the commission secretary, Room 1350, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. Please contact the commission secretary for the appeal procedures and fee at (213) 974-6409. **The appeal period for this project will end at 5:00 p.m. on December 15, 2009**. Any appeal must be delivered in person to the commission secretary by this time. If no appeal is filed during the specified period, the Hearing Officer's action is final.

The attached documents contain the Hearing Officer's findings and conditions relating to the approval. Please carefully review each condition. A Condition requires that the permittee records an affidavit accepting the conditions before the grant becomes effective.

Upon completion of the appeal period, please notarize the attached acceptance forms and **hand deliver** this form and any other required fees or materials to the planner assigned to your case. Please **make an appointment** with the case planner to assure that processing will be completed expeditiously.

For further information on appeal procedures or any other matter pertaining to these approvals, please contact **Maral Tashjian** of the Special Projects Section at (213) 974-1516 or e-mail at Mtashjian@planning.lacounty.gov. Our office hours are Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are closed on Fridays.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

Samuel Dea, Supervising Regional Planner
Special Projects Section

SD:mt

Enclosures: Approved Findings and Conditions, Affidavit (Permittee's Completion)
c: DPW (Building and Safety); Zoning Enforcement

PROJECT NUMBER R2008-01122-(5)
OAK TREE PERMIT NUMBER 200800036

HEARING OFFICER'S FINDINGS AND ORDER:

REQUEST: The applicant, Felix Obamogie, is requesting an Oak Tree Permit to authorize the retroactive encroachments into the protected zone of three oak trees for the construction of a new single family residence. The applicant has constructed a retaining wall within the protected zone of two oak trees (identified on the site plan as **Tree #1** and **#2**), and a driveway within the protected zone of the third tree (identified as **Tree #3**). The applicant is also proposing to extend an existing retaining block wall into the protected zone of the third oak tree (**Tree #3**). No oak tree removals are proposed as part of this permit.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE HEARING OFFICER:
December 1, 2009 Public Hearing

A duly noticed public hearing was held on December 1, 2009 before the Hearing Officer. The applicants, Felix and Violet Obamogie, were sworn in and testified in favor of the request. There being no further testimony, the Hearing Officer closed the public hearing, expressed his intent to approve the subject project, subject to the conditions recommended by staff and agreed to by the applicant's representative.

Findings

1. The subject property is a 0.49 acre, rectangular-shaped parcel of land, located at the 3323 Marengo Ave, Altadena, in the Altadena Zoned District within the unincorporated community of Altadena. The Assessor Parcel Number of the subject property is 5833-033-006.

2. The subject property is zoned R-1-10,000 (Single-Family Residence, 10,000 square foot minimum lot size). Surrounding properties are zoned as follows:

   North: R-1-10,000
   East: R-1-10,000, R-1-7,500 (Single-Family Residence, 7,500 sq. ft. minimum lot size)
   South: R-1-7,500
   West: R-1-10,000

3. The subject property and surrounding properties within a 500-foot radius are all currently developed with single-family residences with the exception of one vacant parcel to the east.

4. The site plan depicts a 0.49 acre property, developed with an existing 6,015 square foot single-family residence currently under construction, authorized by Plot Plan No. 200600660. An existing six-foot high maximum retaining block wall encroaches into the protected zone of two oak trees (**Tree #1** and **#2**) along the southern property line. An existing driveway and a proposed six-foot high maximum retaining block wall encroach into the protected zone of a third oak tree (**Tree #3**) along the northern property line. Access to the project site is provided via Marengo Avenue.

5. Previous zoning cases includes:
   - **Certificate of Compliance No. 200600318** was recorded on June 16, 2006.
   - **Plot Plan No. 200600660** to authorize the construction of the existing single-family residence was approved on August 14, 2006.

- **Zoning Conformance Review No. 200800709** to authorize a 15 square foot addition to the existing single-family residence was approved on October 22, 2008.
- **Zoning Conformance Review No. 200901036** to authorize the construction of block walls and retaining walls along portions of the property line was approved on October 28, 2009.
- **Zoning Enforcement Case No. 08-0005860/EF No. 080679** was issued for the unauthorized encroachment to the protected zone of two oak trees on the subject property. This oak tree permit request is to remedy the zoning violation.

6. The subject property is located within the *Low Density Residential* land use classification of the Altadena Community Plan. The Low Density land use category is intended for "common single-family residential tract development" at a density of one (1) to six (6) dwelling units per gross acre. The existing single-family residence on the subject property is compatible with this land use designation.

7. The subject property is surrounded by single-family residences and vacant land. The encroachment of three oak trees to accommodate the construction of a single-family residence will not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood.

8. Pursuant to Section 22.56.2060 of Title 22, destroying, removing, relocating, damaging or encroaching into a protected zone of any tree of the oak genus which is 25 inches or more in circumference is prohibited without a permit. The protected zone is the area extending five feet beyond the drip-line of the tree or 15 feet from the trunk, whichever is greater.

   Pursuant to Section 22.56.2140, the applicant's oak tree report, as required by Section 22.56.2090, was referred to the County Forester to review the accuracy of statements contained therein, and to inspect the project site.

9. The County Forester, in a letter dated September 23, 2009, concurred with the oak tree report, dated May 12, 2008, which was completed by certified arborist James R. Miller. The Forester recommends approval of the Oak Tree Permit, subject to the conditions and recommendations provided in the Forester's report. This document has been included as part of the conditions of approval.

10. The applicant is required to substantiate all facts identified by Section 22.56.2100 of the Los Angeles County Code. The applicant has met the oak tree permit burden of proof.

11. Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 22.60.174 and 22.60.175 of the County Code, the community was appropriately notified of the public hearing by mail, newspaper, property posting, library posting and DRP website posting.

12. One phone call was received from the owner of the abutting property to the north (APN No. 5833-003-002), who had general questions about the nature of the applicant's request.

13. The Department of Regional Planning has determined this project to be Categorically Exempt (Class 4 Exemption - Minor Alteration to Land) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Los Angeles County environmental guidelines.

14. The location of documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Hearing Officer's decision is based in this matter is the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, 13th Floor, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Section Head of the Zoning Permits Section, Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning.

BASED ON THE FORGOING, THE HEARING OFFICER CONCLUDES:

A. That the proposed construction of proposed use will be accomplished without endangering the health of the remaining trees subject to this Part 16 of Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Code, if any, on the subject property;

B. That the encroachment into the protected zone of three (3) oak trees proposed will not result in soil erosion through the diversion or increased flow of surface waters which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated;

C. That the encroachment of the oak trees proposed is necessary as continued existence at present locations frustrates the planned improvement or proposed use of the subject property to such an extent that placement of such trees precludes the reasonable and efficient use of such property for a use otherwise authorized; and

D. That the encroachment of the oak trees proposed will not be contrary to or be in substantial conflict with the intent and purpose of the oak tree permit procedure;

AND, THEREFORE, the information submitted by the applicant and presented at the public hearing substantiates the required findings and burden of proof for an Oak Tree Permit as set forth in Section 22.56.2100 of the Los Angeles County Code.

HEARING OFFICER ACTION:

1. The Hearing Officer finds that the project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is within a class of projects, which have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets the criteria set forth in section 15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines and Class 4 of the County Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G.

2. In view of the findings of facts presented above, Oak Tree Permit Number 200800036 is **APPROVED**, subject to the attached conditions.

Attachments: Conditions
Affidavit

c: Hearing Officer, Zoning Enforcement, Building and Safety

This grant authorizes encroachment into the protected zone of three (3) oak trees to accommodate the construction of a new single-family residence as depicted on the Exhibit "A," subject to the following conditions:

1. Unless otherwise apparent from the context, the term "permittee" shall include the applicant and any other person, corporation, or other entity making use of this grant.

2. This grant shall not be effective for any purpose until the permittee, and the owner of the subject property if other than the permittee, have filed at the office of the Department of Regional Planning their affidavit stating that they are aware of and agree to accept all of the conditions of this grant, and that the conditions of the grant have been recorded as required by Condition No. 7, and until all required monies have been paid pursuant to Condition No. 8. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this condition (No. 3), and Condition Nos. 3, 4, and 5 shall be effective immediately upon final approval of this grant by the County.

3. The permittee shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the County, its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against the County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void or annul this permit approval, which action is brought within the applicable time period of Government Code Section 65009 or any other applicable limitation period. The County shall notify the permittee of any claim, action, or proceeding and the County shall reasonably cooperate in the defense.

4. In the event that any claim, action, or proceeding as described above is filed against the County, the permittee shall within ten (10) days of the filing pay the Department of Regional Planning an initial deposit of $5,000, from which actual costs shall be billed and deducted for the purpose of defraying the expenses involved in the department's cooperation in the defense, including but not limited to, depositions, testimony, and other assistance to permittee or permittee's counsel. The permittee shall also pay the following supplemental deposits, from which actual costs shall be billed and deducted:

    a. If during the litigation process, actual costs incurred reach 80 percent of the amount on deposit, the permittee shall deposit additional funds sufficient to bring the balance up to the amount of the initial deposit. There is no limit to the number of supplemental deposits that may be required prior to completion of the litigation.
    b. At the sole discretion of the permittee, the amount of an initial or supplemental deposit may exceed the minimum amounts defined herein.

    The cost for collection and duplication of records and other related documents will be paid by the permittee in accordance with Los Angeles County Code Section 2.170.010.

5. This grant shall expire unless used within two (2) years from the date of final approval by the county. A single one-year time extension may be requested in writing and with payment of the applicable fee.

6. If any provision of this grant is held or declared to be invalid, the permit shall be void and the privileges granted hereunder shall lapse.

7. Prior to the use of this grant, the terms and conditions of the grant shall be recorded in the office of the County Recorder. In addition, upon any transfer or lease of the property during the term of this grant, the permittee shall promptly provide a copy of the grant and its conditions to the transferee or lessee, as applicable, of the subject property.

8. The subject property shall be maintained and operated in full compliance with the conditions of this grant and any law, statute, ordinance, or other regulation applicable to any development or activity on the subject property. Failure of the permittee to cease any development or activity not in full compliance shall be a violation of these conditions. Prior to the use of this grant, the permittee shall deposit with the County of Los Angeles Fire Department a sum of **$300.00** to compensate the County Forester $100.00 per inspection to determine the permittee's compliance with the conditions of approval.

9. Notice is hereby given that any person violating a provision of this grant is guilty of a misdemeanor. Notice is further given that the Regional Planning Commission or a hearing officer may, after conducting a public hearing, revoke or modify this grant, if the Commission or hearing officer finds that these conditions have been violated or that this grant has been exercised so as to be detrimental to the public's health or safety or so as to be a nuisance.

10. All requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and of the specific zoning of the subject property must be complied with unless specifically modified by this grant, as set forth in these conditions or shown on the approved plans.

11. The subject property shall be maintained in substantial conformance with the plans marked Exhibit "A."

12. The permittee shall comply with all recommended conditions and requirements set forth in the attached County of Los Angeles Forester and Fire Warden letter dated September 23, 2009, to the satisfaction of the Forester and Fire Warden.

Attachments
County of Los Angeles Forester and Fire Warden letter, September 23, 2009

SD:mt
12/1/09

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294
(323) 890-4330

SEP 28 2009

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

September 23, 2009

Samuel Dea, Principal Regional Planner
Department of Regional Planning
Zoning Permits Section
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr Dea:

OAK TREE PERMIT #2008-00036, 3323 MARENGO AVENUE, ALTADENA

We have reviewed the "Request for Oak Tree Permit #2008-00036." The project is located at 3323 Marengo Avenue in the unincorporated area of Altadena. The Oak Tree Report is accurate and complete as to the location, size, condition and species of the Oak trees on the site. The term "Oak Tree Report" refers to the document on file by James R. Miller, the consulting arborist, dated May 12, 2009.

We recommend the following as conditions of approval:

OAK TREE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:

1. This grant shall not be effective until the permittee and the owner of the property involved (if other than the permittee), have filed at the office of the Department of Regional Planning their affidavit stating that they are aware of and agree to accept all conditions of this grant. Unless otherwise apparent from the context, the term "permittee" shall include the applicant and any other person, corporation or other entity making use of this grant.

2. The permittee shall, prior to commencement of the use authorized by this grant, deposit with the County of Los Angeles Fire Department a sum of $300. Such fees shall be used to compensate the County Forester $100 per inspection to cover expenses incurred while inspecting the project to determine the permittee's compliance with the conditions of approval. The above fees provide for one (1) initial inspection prior to the commencement

of construction and two (2) subsequent inspections until the conditions of approval have been met. The Director of Regional Planning and the County Forester shall retain the right to make regular and unannounced site inspections.

3. Before commencing work authorized or required by this grant, the consulting arborist shall submit a letter to the Director of Regional Planning and the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division stating that he or she has been retained by the permittee to perform or supervise the work, and that he or she agrees to report to the Director of Regional Planning and the County Forester any failure to fully comply with the conditions of the grant. The arborist shall also submit a written report on permit compliance upon completion of the work required by this grant. The report shall include a diagram showing the exact number and location of all mitigation trees planted as well as planting dates.

4. The permittee shall arrange for the consulting arborist or a similarly qualified person to maintain all remaining Oak trees on the subject property that are within the zone of impact as determined by the County Forester for the life of the Oak Tree Permit or the Conditional Use Permit.

5. The permittee shall install temporary chainlink fencing, not less than four (4) feet in height, to secure the protected zone of all remaining Oak trees on site as necessary. The fencing shall be installed prior to grading or tree removal, and shall not be removed without approval of the County Forester. The term "protected zone" refers to the area extending five (5) feet beyond the dripline of the Oak tree (before pruning), or fifteen (15) feet from the trunk, whichever is greater.

6. Copies of the Oak Tree Report, Oak tree map, mitigation planting plan and conditions of approval shall be kept on the project site and available for review. All individuals associated with the project as it relates to the Oak resource shall be familiar with the Oak Tree Report, Oak tree map, mitigation planting plan and conditions of approval.

PERMITTED OAK TREE ENCROACHMENT:

7. This grant allows encroachment within the protected zone of three (3) trees of the Oak genus identified as Tree Numbers 1, 2 and 3 on the applicant's site plan and Oak Tree Report. Trenching, excavation, or clearance of vegetation within the protected zone of an Oak tree shall be accomplished by the use of hand tools or small hand-held power tools. Any major roots encountered shall be conserved to the extent possible and treated as recommended by the consulting arborist.

8. In addition to the work expressly allowed by this permit, remedial pruning intended to ensure the continued health of a protected Oak tree or to improve its appearance or structure may be performed. Such pruning shall include the removal of deadwood and stubs and medium pruning of branches two-inches in diameter or less in accordance with the guidelines published by the National Arborist Association. Copies of these guidelines are available from the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division. In no case shall more than 20% of the tree canopy of any one tree be removed.

9. Except as otherwise expressly authorized by this grant, the remaining Oak trees shall be maintained in accordance with the principles set forth in the publication, "Oak Trees: Care and Maintenance," prepared by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division. A copy of the publication is enclosed with these conditions.

MITIGATION TREES:

10. The permittee shall provide mitigation trees of the Oak genus at a rate of two to one (2:1) for any tree specified above that dies as a result of the approved encroachments.

11. Each mitigation tree shall be at least a 15-gallon specimen in size and measure one (1) inch or more in diameter one (1) foot above the base. Free form trees with multiple stems are permissible provided the combined diameter of the two (2) largest stems of such trees measure a minimum of one (1) inch in diameter one (1) foot above the base.

12. Mitigation trees shall consist of indigenous varieties of *Quercus agrifolia* grown from a local seed source.

13. Mitigation trees shall be planted within one (1) year of the permitted Oak tree removals. Mitigation trees shall be planted either on site or at an off-site location approved by the County Forester. Alternatively, a contribution to the County of Los Angeles Oak Forest Special Fund may be made in the amount equivalent to the Oak resource loss. The contribution shall be calculated by the consulting arborist and approved by the County Forester according to the most current edition of the International Society of Arboriculture's "Guide for Plant Appraisal."

14. The permittee shall properly maintain each mitigation tree and shall replace any tree failing to survive due to a lack of proper care and maintenance with a tree meeting the specifications set forth above. The two-year maintenance period will begin upon receipt of a letter from the permittee or consulting arborist to the Director of Regional Planning and the County Forester indicating that the mitigation trees have been planted. The maintenance period of the trees failing to survive two (2) years will start anew with the new replacement trees. Subsequently, additional monitoring fees shall be required.

15. All mitigation Oak trees planted as a condition of this permit shall be protected in perpetuity by the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance once they have survived the required maintenance period.

NON-PERMITTED ACTIONS AND VIOLATIONS:

16. Encroachment within the protected zone of any additional tree of the Oak genus on the project site is prohibited.

17. Should encroachment within the protected zone of any additional tree of the Oak genus on the project site not permitted by this grant result in its injury or death within two (2) years,

the permittee shall be required to make a contribution to the Los Angeles County Oak Forest Special Fund in the amount equivalent to the Oak resource damage/loss. Said contribution shall be calculated by the consulting arborist and approved by the County Forester according to the most current edition of the International Society of Arboriculture's "Guide for Plant Appraisal."

18. No planting or irrigation system shall be installed within the dripline of any Oak tree that will be retained.

19. Utility trenches shall not be routed within the protected zone of an Oak tree unless the serving utility requires such locations.

20. Equipment, materials and vehicles shall not be stored, parked, or operated within the protected zone of any Oak tree. No temporary structures shall be placed within the protected zone of any Oak tree.

21. Violations of the conditions of this grant shall result in immediate work stoppage or in a notice of correction depending on the nature of the violation. A time frame within which deficiencies must be corrected will be indicated on the notice of correction.

22. Should any future inspection disclose that the subject property is being used in violation of any one of the conditions of this grant; the permittee shall be held financially responsible and shall reimburse the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division for all enforcement efforts necessary to bring the subject property into compliance.

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (323) 890-4330.

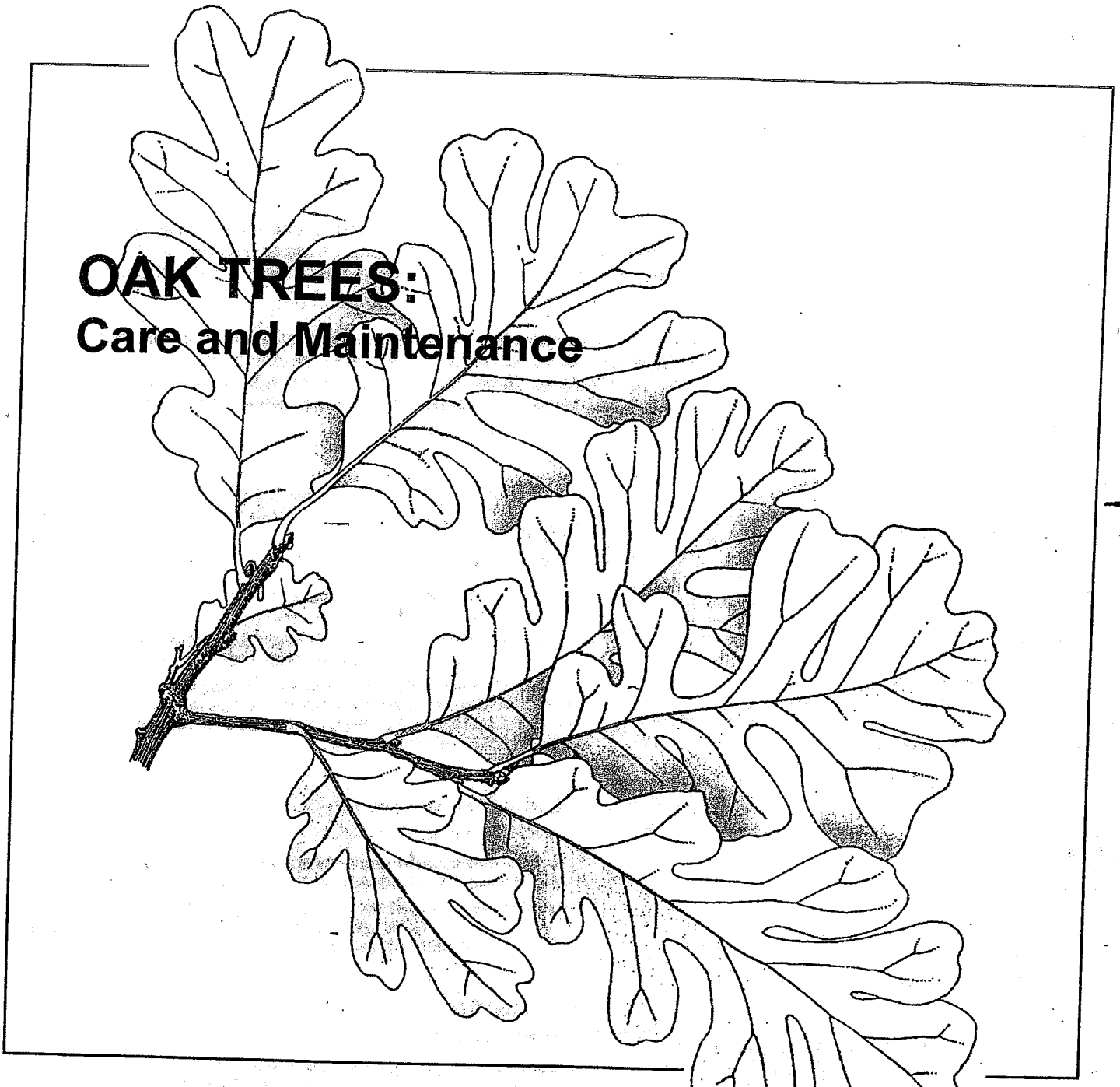
Very truly yours,

FRANK VIDALES, ACTING CHIEF, FORESTRY DIVISION
PREVENTION SERVICES BUREAU

FV:jl

Enclosure

OAK TREES:
Care and Maintenance



This Oak Tree Care and Maintenance Guide offers basic information and practical guidelines aimed at the preservation and continued health and survival of oak trees in the residential landscape.

Increasing pressure for development is changing the oak woodland of Los Angeles County. Heritage oaks which once survived in open rolling hills are now being preserved or replanted and incorporated into the community.

How do we protect these trees during the planning and development process, and ensure their survival once they are in the home garden?

The Oak Tree

Oak Trees in the residential landscape often suffer decline and early death due to conditions that are easily preventable. Damage can often take years to become evident, and by the time the trees show obvious signs of disease it is usually too late to help.

Improper watering, especially during the hot summer months, and disturbance to critical root areas are most often the causes. This booklet will provide guidelines on where these critical areas lie and ways to avoid disturbing them, as well as information on long-term care and maintenance of both natural and planted oaks. Lists of additional resources for more information and demonstration areas to visit are also included.

The Oak Tree Ordinance

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance has been established to recognize oak trees as significant historical, aesthetic, and ecological resources. The goal of the ordinance is to create favorable conditions for the preservation and propagation of this unique and threatened plant heritage. By making this part of the development process, healthy oak trees will be preserved and maintained.

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance applies to all unincorporated areas of the County. Individual cities may have their own ordinances, and their requirements may be different.

Permit Requirements:

Under the Los Angeles County Ordinance, a person shall not cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the *protected zone* (see text) of any ordinance sized tree of the oak tree genus without first obtaining a permit.

Damage includes but is not limited to :

- Burning
- Application of toxic substances
- Pruning or cutting
- Trenching
- Excavating
- Paving
- Operation of machinery or
- equipment
- Changing the natural grade

Chapter 22.56.2050: Oak Tree -Permit Regulations, Los Angeles County, Adopted: August 20, 1982. Amended: September 13, 1988.

For more information about the County Oak Tree Ordinance, visit the Forestry Division's website at:

http://lacofd.org/Forestry_folder/otordin.htm

Or contact:

Department of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple Street, 13th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3284
(213) 974-6411
TDD: (213) 617-2292
http://planning.co.la.ca.us

Types of oaks commonly found in Los Angeles County:

Many kinds of oak trees are native to Los Angeles County. A few of the more common ones are shown below, but *all* oak trees are covered by the Oak Tree Ordinance.

Older oaks which have thrived under the natural rainfall patterns of dry summers and wet winters often can't handle the extra water of a garden setting. These trees must be treated with special care if they are to survive.

Those oaks that have been planted into the landscape or sprouted naturally tend to be more tolerant of watered landscapes. These vigorous young trees may grow 1½ to 4 feet a year in height under good conditions. Once established these trees would benefit from the same special care outlined in this guide.

Valley Oak
QUERCUS LOBATA

LARGE DECIDUOUS TREE 60'-75' HIGH, BROADLY SPREADING 50'-80' WIDE.

LEAVES: DEEP GREEN, 3"-4" LONG: PAPER-LIKE TEXTURE WITH DEEP ROUNDED LOBES ON THE LEAF EDGE.

TENDS TO FAVOR VALLEY BOTTOMS: FOR THIS REASON THE VALLEY OAK HAS DISAPPEARED FROM THE LANDSCAPE MORE RAPIDLY, IMPACTED SEVERLY BY AGRICULTURE and URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

Coast Live Oak
QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA

LARGE EVERGREEN TREE WITH A BROAD, ROUND SHAPE AND LARGE LIMBS. 30'-70' HIGH, 35'-80' WIDE.

LEAVES: GLOSSY GREEN, 1"-3" LONG: SPINY, ROUNDED, AND HOLLY-LIKE: BUT DISTINCTLY CUPPED OR CURLED UNDER AT THE EDGES.

Interior Live Oak
QUERCUS WISLIZENII

EVERGREEN TREE 30'-75' HIGH OR A SHRUB 8'-10' HIGH IN CHAPARRAL AREAS. HAS A FULL, DENSE ROUNDED SHAPE, NOT BROAD OR WITH LARGE LIMBS LIKE A COAST LIVE OAK. THEY TEND TO GROW IN CLUMPS RATHER THAN AS A SINGLE TREE.

LEAVES: DARK GREEN, 1"-4" LONG. EDGES EITHER SMOOTH OR SPINY, BUT ALWAYS FLAT— NOT CURLED UNDER.

OTHER COMMON OAKS:
CALIFORNIA BLACK OAK: QUERCUS KELLOGGI
CANYON LIVE OAK: QUERCUS CHRYSOLEPIS
ENGELMANN OAK: QUERCUS ENGELMANNII

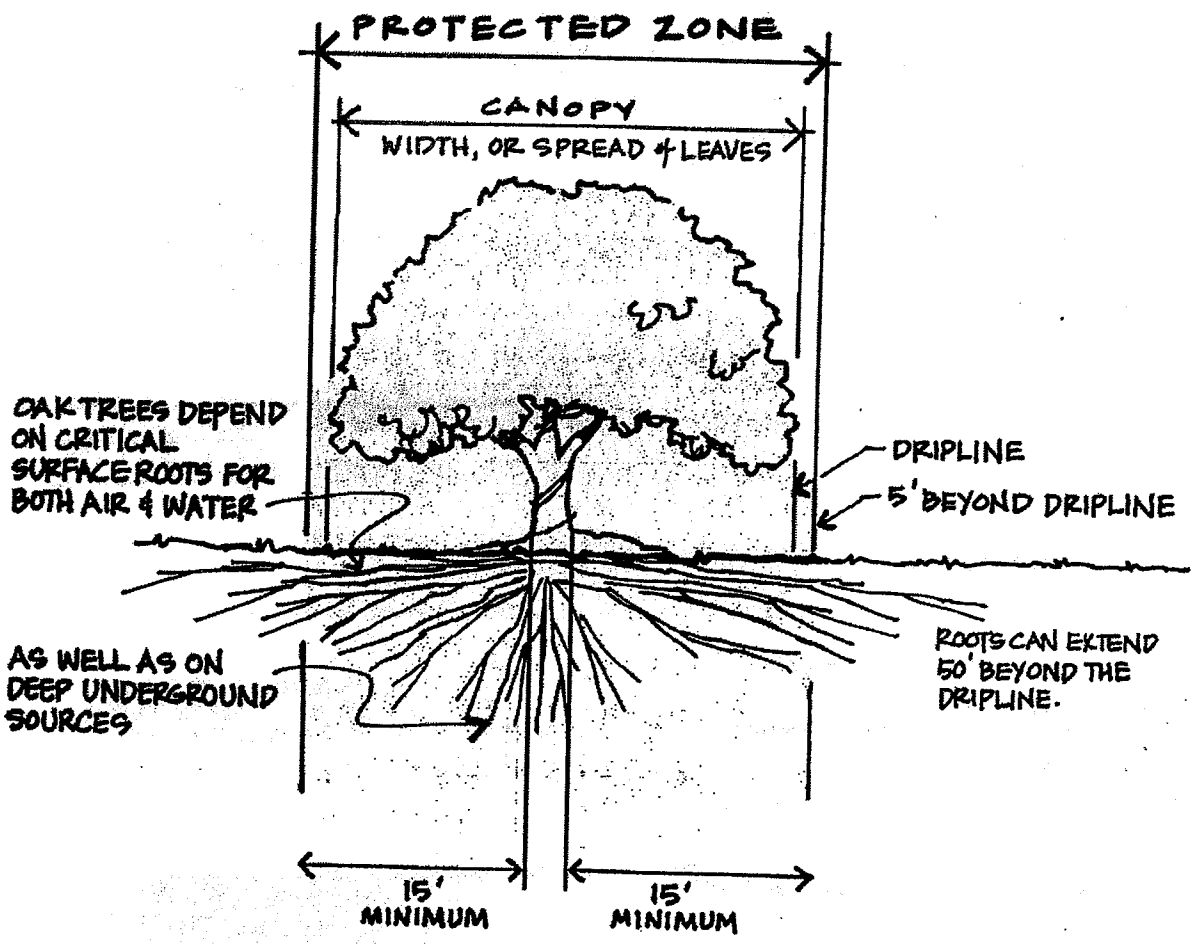
THE PROTECTED ZONE

The ***protected zone*** defines the area most critical to the health and continued survival of an oak tree. Oaks are easily damaged and very sensitive to disturbances that occur to the tree or in the surrounding environment.

The root system is extensive but surprisingly shallow, sometimes radiating out as much as 50 feet beyond the spread of the tree leaves, or canopy. The ground area at the outside edge of the canopy, referred to as the *dripline*, is especially important: the tree obtains most of its surface water and nutrients here, and conducts an important exchange of air and other gases.

The protected zone is defined in the Oak Tree Ordinance as follows:

> "The Protected Zone shall mean that area within the dripline of an oak tree and extending there from to a point at least 5 feet outside the dripline or 15 feet from the trunk, whichever distance is greater."



CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PROTECTED ZONE

Changes in Grade

Any change in the level of soil around an oak tree can have a negative impact. The most critical area lies within 6' to 10' of the trunk: no soil should be added or scraped away. Water should drain away from this area and not be allowed to pond so that soil remains wet at the base.

Retaining walls designed to hold back soil above or below an existing tree should avoided if at all possible, especially within the protected zone. These types of structures cause critical areas at the dripline to be buried, or require that major roots be severed. Water trapped at the base of the tree could lead to root rot or other impacts, and to the decline and premature death of a highly valued landscape tree.

Construction activities outside the protected zone can have damaging impacts on existing trees. Underground water sources can be cut off due to falling water tables, or drainage may be disrupted.

Trenching

Digging of trenches in the root zone should be avoided. Roots may be cut or severely damaged, and the tree can be killed.

If trenches must be placed within the protected zone, utilities can be placed in a conduit, which has been bored through the soil, reducing damage to the roots. Insist that as many utilities as allowed be placed in a single trench, instead of the common practice of digging a separate trench for each individual line.

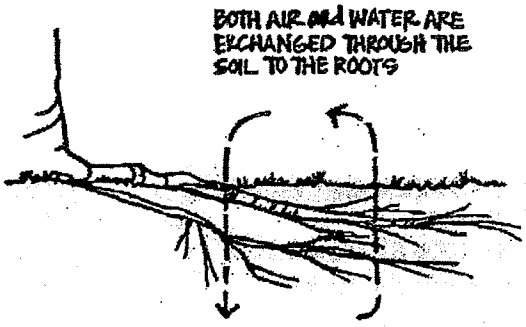
Trenching can also be accomplished using hand tools or small hand held power equipment to avoid cutting roots. Any roots exposed during this work should be covered with wet burlap and kept moist until the soil can be replaced.

Soil Compaction and Paving

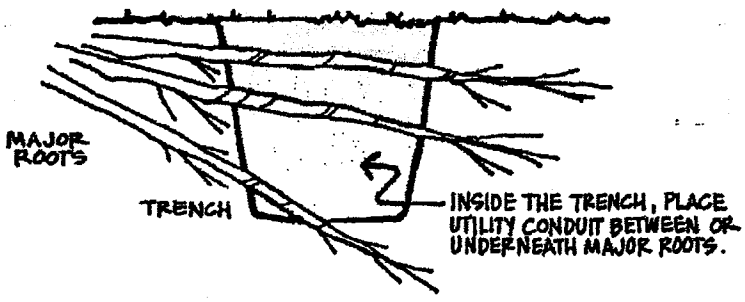
The roots depend upon an important exchange of both water and air through the soil within the protected zone. Any kind of activity that compacts the soil in this area blocks this exchange and can have serious long-term negative effects on the tree.

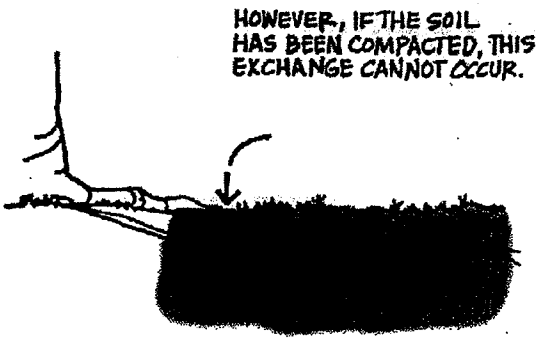
If paving material must be used, some recommended surfaces include brick paving with sand joints, or ground coverings such as wood chips (note the advantages of natural materials for providing nutrients under *mulching*).

SOIL COMPACTION



TRENCHING





MAINTENANCE

Watering

The key is prevention – **do not over water**. Improper watering is often overlooked as the cause of tree death because it can take years for the damage to show. Once the tree shows obvious signs of decline, it is often too late to correct the problem.

The seasonal weather pattern for this region is one of dry summers and winter rain. Oak trees are naturally drought tolerant and adapted to this cycle. If the tree is vigorous and thriving it should not require **any** additional water.

If the natural source of surface or underground water has been altered, some supplemental water may be necessary, but proceed with caution. The goal of any watering schedule for oak trees should be to supplement natural rainfall and it should occur only when the tree would normally receive moisture. This might be in the winter, if rains are unusually late, or in spring if rainfall has been below normal levels.

Over watering, especially during the summer months, causes a number of problems which can lead to decline and eventual death of the tree. It creates ideal conditions for attacks of Oak Root Fungus by allowing the fungus to breed all year. In addition, both evergreen and deciduous oaks grow vigorously in the spring and naturally go dormant in the summer. Extra water only encourages new tip growth which is subject to mildew. Oaks need this period of rest.

Newly planted oaks may need supplemental watering during their first few summers. After they become established water should be applied according to the previous guidelines.

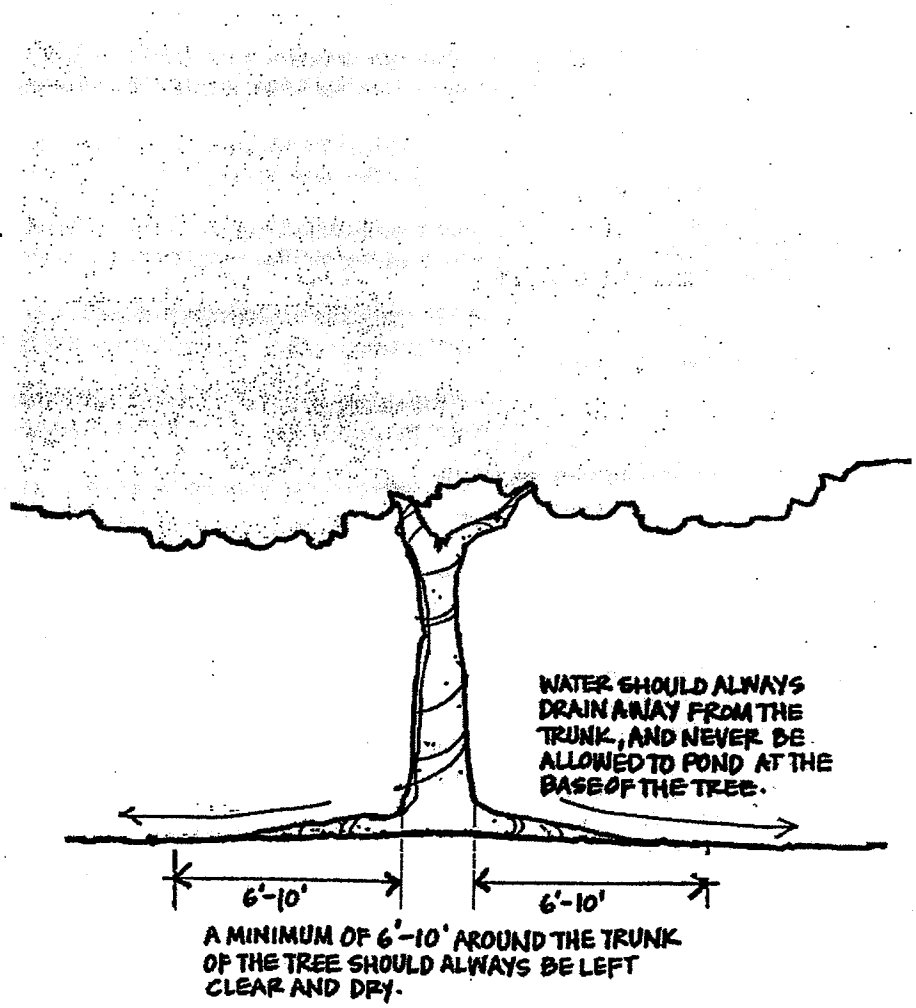
Pruning

For oak trees the periodic removal of dead wood during periods of tree dormancy should be the only pruning needed. Any cutting of green wood opens scars that could allow the entry of organisms or disease.

Before pruning obtain the advice of a certified arborist or other professional and consult the local city or county where the tree is located to find out what regulations apply. Pruning of both live and dead wood can sometimes require a permit.

Mulching

Leaf litter from the tree is the best mulch and should be allowed to remain on the ground within the protected zone. Crushed walnut shells or wood chips can be used, but the oak leaves that drop naturally provide the tree with a source of nutrients. Avoid the use of packaged or commercial oak leaf mulch which could contain Oak Root Fungus. Redwood chips should not be used due to certain chemicals present in the wood.



Disease and Pests

Trees that are stressed, especially because of improper watering practices, are prone to certain diseases and attacks by pests.

The most damaging of these diseases is the Oak Root Fungus *Armillaria mellea*. Occurring naturally in the soil, the fungus thrives under wet conditions and dies back in the summer when soils dry out. This is why summer watering of oaks can be a deadly practice. As noted in the watering guidelines, wet soil in the summer allows the fungus to grow all year. As the population grows, their natural food sources are depleted and they begin feeding on oak tree roots. The fungus does not require an open wound in the tree to gain entry.

Indications of the fungus include:

- die back of branches or tips.
- honey colored fungus at or near the root crown.
- white fan-like fungus between wood and bark.
- the presence of black, shoestring-like growths in the soil.

Once the tree begins to show obvious signs of infection treatment is generally ineffective. The best treatment is to *avoid* the conditions that lead to Oak Root Fungus infections.

Pit Scale, Oak Moth, and other pests: any significant changes in leaf color, branch die back, presence of black sooty materials on leaves or other changes should be noted. Seek the advice of a professional forester, arborist, farm advisor or other expert before the application of any pesticides on an oak tree.

Planting Underneath Oaks

The natural leaf litter is by far the best ground cover within the protected zone. If plants must be placed, the following guidelines should be followed:

There should be no planting within a minimum 6 to 10 feet of the trunk.

Avoid plants that require any supplemental water once established.

Choose plants suited for "dry shade." Those listed in the box below offer some good choices. To see some examples of how these plants have been used under oaks refer to the Additional Resources section on the following page.

PLANTS TO CONSIDER:

Plant Name	Description
Arctostaphylos densiflora 'Howard McMinn' Manzanita	3' high, 6' wide. Toughest of available forms. Whitish-pink flowers.
Arctostaphylos edmundsii Little Sur Manzanita	1-2' high, 4-5' wide. Tolerant of full shade.
Arctostaphylos hookeri Monterey Carpet Manzanita	1-2' high, spreading to 12' wide by rooting branches. White to pink flowers.
Ceanothus griseus horizontalis Carmel Creeper	Less than 2 1/2' tall, low & creeping. Clusters of small blue flowers.
Heuchera spp. Coral Bells	2-4' mound. Flowers on an upright stem 2-3" high and spotted with red or pink.
Mahonia aquifolium compacta Oregon Grape	2-4' high, spreading by underground roots. Bright yellow flower clusters.
Ribes viburnifolium Evergreen or Catalina Currant	2-3' high, spreading to 12' wide. Flowers pink to red in small clusters.

NOTES:

Before deciding on plants, check a source such as the *Sunset Western Garden Book* to determine which plants will grow in your area.

When choosing shade tolerant plants, consider that the ground under the south side of the tree will get more sunlight while the northern side will tend to remain more deeply shaded.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and Places to Visit

Public Agencies

County of Los Angeles Fire Department
Prevention Bureau, Forestry Division
5823 Rickenbacker Road, Rm #123
Commerce, CA 90040-3027
(323) 890-4330
http://lacofd.org/forestry.htm

University of California
Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program
163 Mulford Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720-3114
http://danr.ucop.edu/ihrmp

Private Organizations

The Theodore Payne Foundation
10459 Tuxford Street
Sun Valley, CA 91352-2126
(818) 768-1802
www.theodorepayne.org

California Native Plant Society
1722 J Street, Suite 17
Sacramento, CA 95814-3033
(916) 447-2677
www.cnps.org

The California Oak Foundation
1212 Broadway, Suite 810
Oakland, CA 94612-1810
(510) 763-0282
www.californiaoaks.org

Arboretums and Botanic Gardens

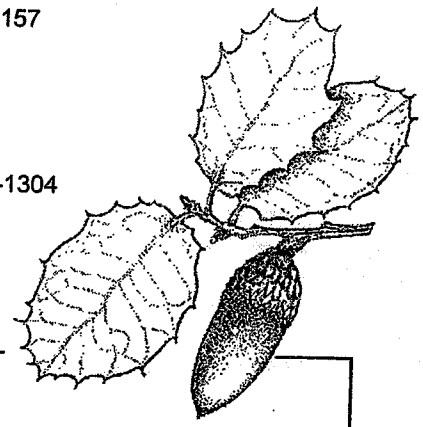
Los Angeles County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens
301 N. Baldwin Ave.
Arcadia, CA 91007-2697
(626) 821-3222
www.arboretum.org

Los Angeles County South Coast Botanic Garden
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274-2515
(310) 544-6815
www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org

Los Angeles County Descanso Gardens
1418 Descanso Drive
La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91011-3102
(818) 949-4200
www.descansogardens.org

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
1500 North College
Claremont, CA 91711-3157
(909) 625-8767
www.rsabg.org

The Lummis Home
200 E. Avenue 43
Los Angeles, CA 90031-1304
(213) 222-0546



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Living Among the Oaks: A Management Guide for Landowners. University of California Integrated Range Management Program. 1995.

Oaks of California. Bruce M. Pavlik...[et al]. Cachuma Press & the California Oak Foundation. 1995.

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Regenerating Rangeland Oaks in California. University of California Integrated Range Management Program. 2001.

County of Los Angeles Fire Department
Forestry Division

County of Los Angeles
Board of Supervisors

Gloria Molina, First District
Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Second District
Zev Yaroslavsky, Third District
Don Knabe, Fourth District
Michael D. Antonovich, Fifth District

County of Los Angeles Fire Department

P. Michael Freeman, Fire Chief

Brush Clearance Unit
605 N. Angeleno Avenue
Azusa, CA 91702-2904
(626) 969-2375

Camp 17
6555 Stephens Ranch Road
La Verne, CA 91750-1144
(909) 593-7147

Environmental Review Unit
12605 Osborne Street
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129
(818) 890-5719

Fire Plan/Interpretive Unit
12605 Osborne Street
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129
(818) 890-5783

Fuel Modification Unit
605 N. Angeleno Avenue
Azusa, CA 91702-2904
(626) 969-5205

Henninger Flats Forestry Unit
2260 Pinecrest Drive
Altadena, CA 91001-2123
(626) 794-0675

Lake Hughes Forestry Unit
42150 N. Lake Hughes Road
Lake Hughes, CA 93532-9706
(661) 724-1810

Malibu Forestry Unit
942 N. Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, CA 91302-2137
(818) 222-1108

San Dimas Forestry Unit
1910 N. Sycamore Canyon Road
San Dimas, CA 91773-1220
(909) 599-4615

Saugus Forestry Unit
28760 N. Bouquet Canyon Road
Saugus, CA 91390-1220
(661) 296-8558

Vegetation Management Unit
12605 Osborne Street
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129
(818) 890-5720