



Guide to Significant Tree Nominations

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1 Purpose of Significant Trees

You could say that it is proposed that successful nominations will be included in Council's planning scheme to provide control measures to protect significant trees.

Trees can be significant for a number of reasons. The best way to pursue recognition for a significant tree in Australia is to make a nomination to Council for inclusion in a Significant Tree Register. Protection for trees included on the Register of Significant Trees can only be achieved through local government planning controls, i.e. by listing them under the Local Heritage Code in Council's planning scheme, along with appropriate controls. It is proposed that successful nominations will be included in Council's planning scheme to provide measures of protection.

Tree protection controls usually include measures such as restrictions in regard to the lopping or removal of the tree itself and assessment of development in close proximity to the tree that may have the potential to impact the health of that tree, e.g. interfering with the root system.

2 Guidelines for Measuring Trees

Many Significant Trees are nominated due to their particularly large size. The size of the tree is measured by height, girth and canopy spread. When considering the status of these trees, the committee assessing a Significant Tree Nomination often finds that the measurements provided are dubious and sometimes very inaccurate. This can result in a worthy tree not being registered until members of the committee can verify the dimensions.

The following advice is provided to assist those nominating trees to provide accurate measurements of height, girth and canopy spread.

Please note that all tree measurements must be in metres (m).

3 Girth

Circumference (or girth) is measured at "breast height", which is taken to be 1.3m above ground level. The easiest way of making this measure is to place a tape measure around the trunk at 1.3m above the ground.

This measurement can also be calculated using the diameter of the single trunk of the tree. This requires the measurement of Diameter at Breast Height, which is often recorded as DBH, which is again measured at 1.3 metres above ground level.

4 Spread

In measuring canopy spread, you should measure from the trunk to the drip-line (which is the outer edge of the canopy) on two opposite sides of the tree. Usually measurements are taken on a north-south and / or east-west axis. However this is not always possible given the location of some trees in crowded gardens where access can be difficult.

If possible it is a good idea to measure spread at all four of the major compass points, as this gives a much better indication of the canopy shape and its impact on the site.

5 Height

The last measurement of height is the one where we have the greatest inaccuracy. Whilst there are clinometers and height meters available, which will accurately measure tree height to within 0.5 metres, these are moderately expensive and are relatively inaccessible. We encourage the use of height meters or clinometers if you have access to these and are familiar with their use. There are also apps available for download to your mobile device which can provide a reasonable estimation.

We also suggest you determine the highest point of the canopy from a distance and measure to that point within the canopy, as it is often difficult to determine the highest point when you are close to the tree.

If you do not have access to a height meter or clinometer, we suggest a simple method for obtaining the height of a tree. Take a square of paper and fold it in half, this creates a triangle with a right angle and two angles of 45 degrees. Holding the triangle of paper with the right angle away from your eye and one of the sides horizontal, sight along the hypotenuse to the top of the tree. You may need to walk towards and away from the trunk a few times to determine the exact highest point of the tree.

Once you have reached the point where the highest part of the canopy is sighted, you know that the height of the tree and the distance you are from the base of the trunk are the same. Measure from the base of the trunk of the tree to the point where you sighted the top of the tree along the 45-degree angle. Add the height from the ground to your eye and this will give the tree height, normally to within accuracy of 1 metre.

6 Guidelines for Photographing Trees

Any recent photographs of the tree that you can provide will be much appreciated. If you wish to take some photographs, please provide a high resolution (2MB to 4MB) digital image of the tree in its context.



Provide any additional photographs including historical records with the source, where known.

Please include where possible:

- close-ups of the trunk (and any branching of interest), fruits, flowers and leaves to assist with identification;
- a shot showing an overall view of the tree;
- an overall shot which includes a structure or person next to tree, to assist in establishing the size of tree (particularly if the measurements of the structure or person are provided); and
- photographs of the tree in different seasons are welcome.

7 Examples

7.1 Why a Tree is Significant

The Pin Oak (Quercus palustris) is significant because it is outstanding as an example of the species, with its wide spreading and well-structured canopy. This specimen has been allowed to grow naturally and develop a canopy from ground level up to its apical points. The full canopy silhouette is rarely allowed to develop in oak species when grown as specimen trees, making this an outstanding example of its species.

It is also significant because it makes a significant aesthetic contribution to the immediate landscape of the street. Its bright autumn colours and seasonal changes provide a major contribution to the greater environment of this suburb. In this region, large fine examples of this oak species are uncommon in a streetscape and are more likely to be found in a private suburban garden.

It is also is significant as a commemorative planting in memory of Lt Frank Stilton, who was a friend of the owner, Mr Thomas Kirby. Lt Stilton was lost in action in Europe in 1917 during the First World War.

7.2 History of the Tree

The Lemon-scented Gums were planted in 1960 by Mr Edward Jones in what is known as 'Citriodora Lawn', as focal points when people drove up the new driveway entrance (now Church Drive) from Hilltop Road. The owner at the time, Mrs Mary Jones (Edward's mother), was advised by the famous Adelaide garden designer Anne Brown (1890 - 1977), in regards to this new drive entrance and suitable plantings.



7.3 Why the Tree's Significance is Beyond Doubt

Subsequent owners appear to have avoided dense plantings around this tree to avoid detracting from its prominence as a feature point in the rear lawn. The tree was protected and retained in 2003 when a substantial extension was added to the house.