



THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

(Author's Note: This is the fourteenth in a series of articles by members of the City of Sanibel Vegetation Committee dealing with vegetative matters of concern to island residents. Members of the Vegetation Committee are Sanibel residents appointed by City Council for one-year terms. To be considered for appointment, contact the City Manager's Office at (239) 472-3700.)

A mistake in planting the 'wrong tree in the wrong place' can be costly! It is always a good idea to evaluate the yard or landscape you are planning to plant in terms of soil, sun/shade, water needs, growth rate, salt tolerance, and leaf persistence, but especially when planting under power lines. In times of hurricanes or high winds, trees that have not been trimmed properly may cause branches or whole trees to fall across wires. The resulting outages are one of the most frequent causes of power interruption and fires.

The City of Sanibel vegetation requirements (Section 122-168) detail planting limitations under overhead power lines as follows: "To reduce maintenance problems due to vegetative growth along overhead power lines within the City, trees or shrubs that exceed twenty feet in height at maturity shall not be planted within ten feet either side of the vertical plane of the centerline of existing overhead power lines (not including service lines)." LCEC, the power provider for Sanibel, has additional guidelines on their website: www.lcec.net/reliability/vegetation-management/planting-trees. To determine the proper place to plant your tree, be sure to consider the size of the tree at maturity, including both the trunk and the canopy.

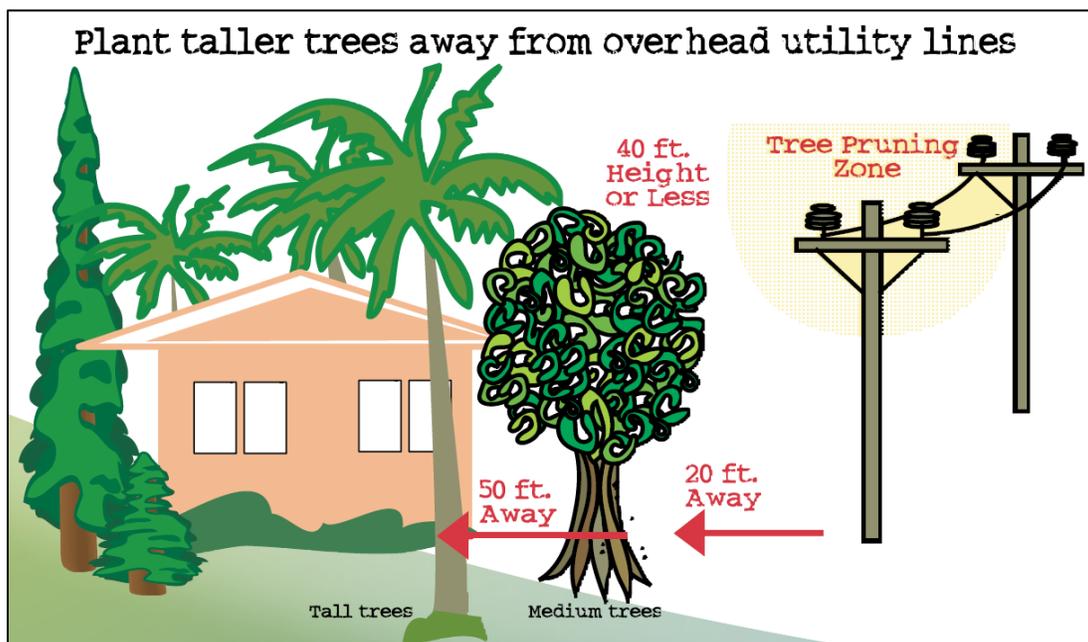


Photo Credit: LCEC

The City's list of horticulturally available native plants gives the heights of trees and shrubs at maturity to help you determine suitable species for planting under power lines. LCEC also has a list of appropriate plants as does the SCCF Native Garden Center and All Native Garden Center. The Natural Resources Department at the City of Sanibel can also provide guidance in planting "power line friendly vegetation".

Some examples of poorly placed trees requiring correction have included mahogany trees which reach 60-70 feet at maturity and royal palms rising to nearly 100 feet, both of which grow well above the height of power lines. In conclusion, plant the right plant, especially under power lines.



**Power lines running through the center of a mahogany tree.
Photo Credit: Dana Dettmar, Conservation Officer**

To read other Vegetation Committee articles in this series please visit the City of Sanibel's Natural Resources Department website: <http://www.mysanibel.com/Departments/Natural-Resources>