



Guidelines for Tree Care and Removal

The [Back Bay Architectural Commission](#) (BBAC) has review authority over front- and rear-yard trees located within the boundaries of the district. Believing that well-maintained trees of appropriate species, scale, and location are an important visual amenity, the Commission discourages the casual removal of trees. In many instances, diseases can be treated, excessive growth may be pruned, and unstable limbs or surface-level roots can be removed, allowing the tree itself to remain. At the same time, the Commission understands that it is sometimes necessary to remove trees whose health or structural integrity has been compromised, or whose roots are causing damage to foundations or other below-grade infrastructure systems.



In considering the appropriateness of removing trees under the relevant guidelines, the BBAC requires that such applications be supplemented by the following items of documentation:

- photographs and site plans depicting the tree or trees identified for removal within their context.
- for trees that are believed to be diseased or unstable, a report from a certified arborist as to the health and viability of the tree(s).
- for trees whose root systems are believed to be disruptive to foundations or utilities, a report from a structural engineer outlining the nature and extent of the compromise.
- a plan for the introduction of replacement tree(s) should the Commission so require.

All arborist-recommended treatment alternatives should be considered before applying for a removal.

The [Garden Club of the Back Bay](#) keeps an [inventory of all trees](#) on private property, along with more information about the [Back Bay's Tree Removal Policy](#). The Garden Club's Tree Committee is available to consult about tree issues, including recommending appropriate species for planting. [Contact them](#).