

# General Questions about Vegetation Removal

## When Do I Need a Vegetation Removal Permit?

- For removal of native vegetation.
- To clear beyond the first acre on a single family lot after the building permit for a single family home is issued. The following restrictions apply.
  - **Previously cleared areas are included in the allowable acre.** In general, the building permit for the home acts as the clearing permit for up to one acre. If, for example, a ½ acre was removed previously, even if it was cleared by another owner, then only another ½ acre may be cleared with the building permit for the home, to equal a total of one acre. A Vegetation Removal Permit may be issued above an acre for accessory structures in accordance with the LDC.
  - **Special zoning overlays and the presence of wetlands may restrict the amount of clearing.** The building permit for the home acts as the clearing permit for up to ONE acre except for parcels located in Rural Fringe Mixed Use District (RFMU), Big Cypress Area of Critical State Concern Special Treatment Overlay (ACSC/ST), or a other Special Treatment (ST) Overlays. These overlays may have different clearing allotments. The presence of wetlands may also restrict the amount of clearing.
- To clear native vegetation in order to construct a perimeter fence or firebreaks
- To remove landscaping due to diseased trees, damage to structure, or safety hazard (Obtain from Landscape Review staff)
- To clear for an approved accessory structure on single-family zoned lots if total acreage cleared, past and present, is more than one acre and the structure cannot be placed in already cleared areas.
- To clear native vegetation in order to gain access to undeveloped property for subsurface soil boring testing.
- To clear legal easements for access to property.
- Mechanical Clearing of Exotic Vegetation.
- Clearing for agricultural uses on Agricultural zoned property.
- Clearing for accessory uses such as horses, gardens, etc. on property where such uses are allowed, such as the Estates.
- **Where do I get a vegetation permit/application?**
- All environmental permits can be downloaded from <https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-a-e/environmental-services/environmental-permitting-project-review/permits-applications>
- Email or call the Business Center at 252-2400 and request staff to email or fax you a copy.
- Can be picked up in the Lobby of the Business Center at 2800 North Horseshoe Drive in the Growth Management Building.
- A permit to remove landscape trees can be obtained at <https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-s-z/zoning-division/zoning-services-section>

## How long does it take to get a Vegetation Removal Permit?

Once a complete application is submitted, staff will review the permit within 20 working days. Additional information may be requested, if needed. There are no guarantees on a timeline for issuance of a permit. The applicant will be contacted when the permit is ready for pick up.

## Can I clear my lot if I have wetlands onsite?

Collier County cannot issue a clearing permit for mechanical removal of vegetation in wetlands without wetland permits from both the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Only after these permits are issued can the County issue a Vegetation Removal Permit. Contact Collier County (239-252-2400) or DEP (239-344-5600) regarding wetlands. Informal Wetlands Determinations may be obtained from Collier County or DEP.

## What is an invasive exotic plant?

Invasive exotic plants are plants that are not native to Florida and out-compete most native plants because they grow quickly and are not affected by native pests and diseases. These plants threaten wildlife habitats and natural areas by invading and displacing native plants that are important to Florida's ecology.

The County has listed 12 invasive exotic plants in the Land Development Code: air potato vine, Australian pine, Brazilian pepper, catclaw mimosa, climbing fern, downy rosemyrtle, earleaf acacia, Java plum, lather leaf, melaleuca, woman's tongue, and carrotwood. The County web site has descriptions and color pictures of each exotic and brochures can be obtained at the Business Center.

**All invasive exotic plants are required to be removed from the entire property prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for principal or accessory structures in accordance with the County's Land Development Code (LDC).**

**Any further information please visit:** <https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-a-e/environmental-services>