Town of Caledon Tree Bylaw Update – 2025
Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs cover key aspects of the Tree Bylaw Update and should help address common questions from the community:

What is a tree canopy cover?

Tree canopy cover refers to all the trees in the Town, both on public and private land. This includes trees in natural areas, as well as those in parks, yards, and along streets. It is the area covered by the treetops, which is measured using aerial photos, often referred to as a “bird’s-eye view.” This is known as "tree canopy cover."

> *Did you know? Around 85% of the Town’s tree cover, or 18,931 hectares, is located on private property. The new bylaw will regulate more trees across the Town, including those on private property.*

How will the bylaw protect the tree canopy?

The bylaw will protect the urban tree canopy by preventing unnecessary removal of mature trees. The benefits of a mature tree outweigh any newly planted tree, and once lost, take decades to be fully replaced.

Will the bylaw apply to all areas of Caledon?

Yes, the bylaw will apply to all private properties, regardless of location or size, which will help protect trees outside settlement areas and ensure that trees in rural and urban environments are equally safeguarded.

How will the bylaw affect me as a resident/homeowner?

As a resident/homeowner, you may need to obtain a permit if you wish to remove trees on your property. The bylaw will apply to all private properties and will help ensure the preservation of high-value trees that contribute to the environment and your quality of life.

When will I need a permit?

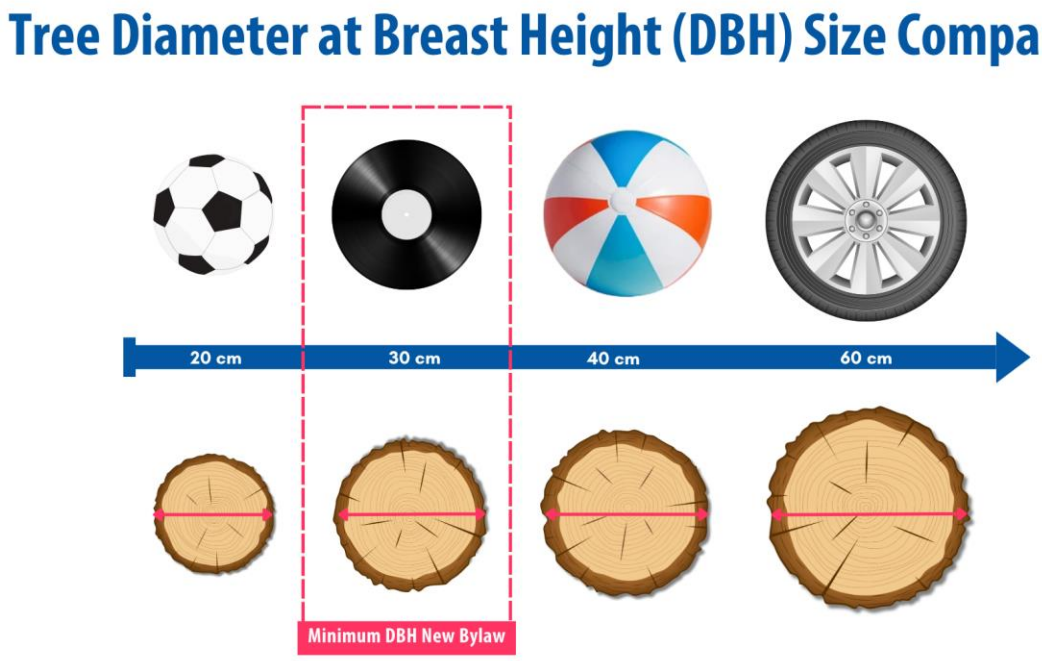
You will need a permit if you plan to remove or damage a tree regulated under the bylaw.

However, there are exemptions where a permit is not required. If your tree does not fall under these exemptions, you will likely need to apply for a permit to ensure compliance with the bylaw.

What types of trees will be protected under this bylaw?

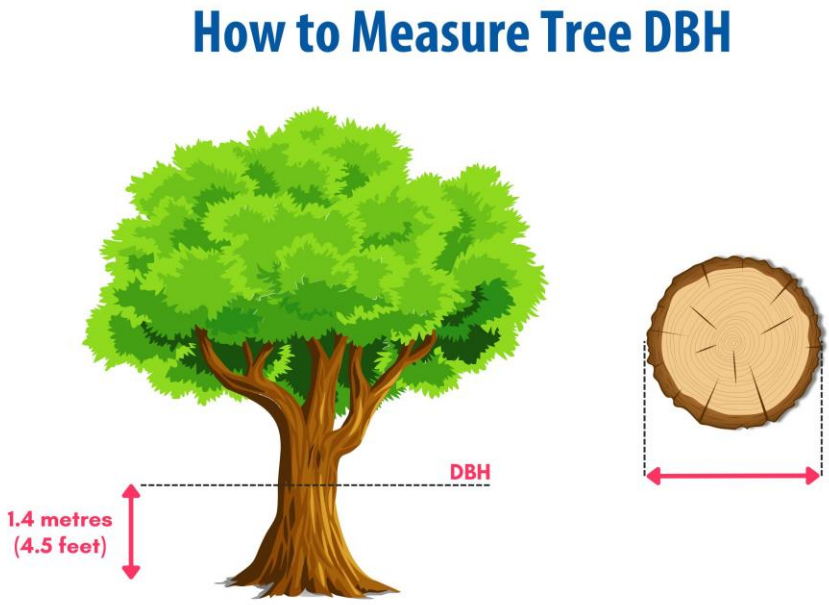
The bylaw will regulate trees based on their size. A "Tree" under the new bylaw refers to any species of woody perennial plant, including its root system, that has reached, can reach, or could potentially reach a height of at least 4.5 meters at full maturity, and has a diameter at breast height (DBH) of at least 30 cm.

If multiple stems grow from the same root system, each stem will be counted as a separate tree at the point of measurement, which is 1.4 meters above the highest point of the ground touching the trunk.



How is tree diameter measured?

Tree diameter is measured at 1.4 metres (4.5 feet) from the ground. The technical term for the measurement is DBH which stands for “diameter at breast height”. To measure tree diameter, you can wrap a soft measuring tape or a string around the trunk to get the circumference and divide by 3.14 to get the diameter. There are also professional tools (such as tree calipers) that provide tree diameter on the spot.



What are the exemptions?

The exemptions include:

- **Woodlands**: Trees regulated by the Woodland Conservation Bylaw are not subject to this bylaw.
- **Dead or Hazardous Trees**: Trees that are dead or deemed hazardous may be exempt, provided an Arborist's certificate is submitted, when required.
- **Emergency Work**: Trees that need to be removed or damaged as part of emergency work are exempt.
- **Certain Locations**: Trees located on rooftops, elevated podiums, or in interior courtyards may be exempt.
- **Contaminated Soil**: Trees growing in contaminated soil that hinder soil remediation may also be exempt, with proper documentation.
- **Commercial Tree Operations**: Trees in nurseries, Christmas tree plantations, or cultivated orchards are exempt.
- **Property Standards Orders**: Trees that need to be removed or damaged due to a Property Standards Order are exempt.
- **Council Exemption**: Trees may also be exempt if granted by Council under specific provisions.

What are the fines and/or penalties?

Fines for violating the tree bylaw can vary depending on the severity of the offense. Typically, if you remove or damage a protected tree without the required permit, you may face fines, which could include **a minimum fine of $500** and a maximum fine of **up to $100,000**. If the offense continues, a daily fine of **at least $500**, with a maximum fine of **up to $10,000 per day**. The total daily fines are not limited to $100,000. In addition, penalties may be applicable in accordance with the new Administrative Monetary Penalty Bylaw.

What steps are being taken to develop the bylaw?

Staff will form a working team with experts in Forestry, Parks, Natural Heritage, Law Enforcement, and Legal services to create the bylaw. There will be community engagement, a review of similar bylaws from other municipalities, and a comprehensive process to ensure the bylaw is effective and fair. A report with a final draft is expected in Q1 2025.

How will the bylaw be enforced?

The Town will establish a permitting and enforcement process involving staff from Planning, Parks, and Bylaw Enforcement to ensure that the bylaw is applied effectively and fairly. Any violations of the bylaw will be subject to penalties to encourage compliance.

How can I stay informed about the progress of the bylaw?

The Town will provide updates through community engagement, the Town's website, and other public communication channels. You can also visit www.haveyoursaycaledon.ca/tree-bylaw for more information about the bylaw update.