

COUNCIL TENANTS

# GARDEN MAINTENANCE

**As a Birmingham City Council Housing tenant, it is your responsibility to maintain the vegetation within your own garden, as per the Conditions of Tenancy.**

There are some Health and Safety exceptions that are shown in our 'Trees in Your Garden' leaflet. The leaflet outlines the circumstances where **Birmingham City Council** may offer assistance.



**You should only undertake maintenance yourself if safe to do so. Consider getting professional advice or assistance if you are unsure.**

Maintenance of your garden includes:

- **Weed removal**
- **Hedge pruning**
- **General tree and shrub pruning**
- **Lawn maintenance**
- **Ivy Pruning**
- **Small tree removal**
- **Removal of garden waste/rubbish**

Regular garden maintenance ensures that you have a pleasant green space to enjoy. It also prevents nuisance issues to your neighbour and reduces the risk of vegetation damaging garden structures and potentially your property. Green spaces are excellent for encouraging wildlife, promoting good health and mental well-being. You can even grow your own fruit and vegetables, a great way to save money and enjoy fresh food.

## Garden Maintenance

- **Weed Control** – use a garden fork, strimmer/brush cutter or garden hoe. Weeds can also be treated with chemical herbicide to prevent regrowth. Some invasive weeds may require several treatments. When using chemicals, always follow the manufacturers guidelines carefully. Best treated when in leaf, on a dry day, spring to autumn.

Use this link to help identify common garden weeds

**[www.rhs.org.uk/advice/common-weeds](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/common-weeds)**

- **Hedge Pruning** – use hedge cutters, loppers, or garden shears to maintain the hedge at a height that is manageable for you. Most hedges will tolerate hard pruning and will require regular pruning within the growing season. (Spring to Autumn)

Use this link for more advice on hedge pruning

**[www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=352](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=352)**

- **General tree and shrub pruning** – use loppers, shears, or hand saw. Many garden trees/shrubs require very little maintenance. Prune to remove low branches over garden paths and prune away from buildings or structures to gain sufficient clearance. For shrubs, as a general rule, prune after the plant has flowered.

Use these links for more advice on tree and shrub pruning

[www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=233](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=233) [www.rhs.org.uk/advice](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice)

[www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Tree-Pruning](http://www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Tree-Pruning)

- **Lawn Maintenance** – regular mowing is required within the growing season
  - The height of the blade should be raised for the first month (March – May)
  - The height of the blade can be lowered (May – August)
  - Raise the height again for the remainder of the growing season
  - Mow less frequently during very dry (drought) conditions when the grass is not growing as much
- **Ivy Removal** – use loppers or hand saw. Whilst not always a problem, Ivy can become a nuisance in the wrong location. Sever ivy at the base to prevent it growing into the crowns of trees or against property walls. Ivy can move roof tiles and cause water ingress! Any re-growth from the base can be treated with herbicide.
- **Small Trees (self-set small trees)** – These are best tackled in the early stages of growth, when they are small enough to be pruned/removed. Use loppers, a handsaw, or a garden spade. Not all trees end up in desirable locations. Certain tree species are extremely efficient at creating and distributing seeds. These seeds can be carried by the wind, birds, or animals. Ash and Sycamore are good examples of trees which have the potential to generate numerous offspring, we call these trees self-set. Self-set trees should be removed by you if they are within close proximity to garden structures, buildings or wherever they are not wanted. Each small sapling has the potential to grow into a mature specimen.

## Garden Maintenance Small tree removal plus small self-setting trees

Self-set Sycamore tree growing in the wrong location.



Ash and Sycamore, most common self-sets, can be removed by you from undesirable locations.



Once they have been removed to ground level, you may wish to dig out the stump or alternatively treat any re-growth with a recommended chemical herbicide. They can be resilient, so may need several applications.

Removing them when they are small and young is much easier and will prevent potential damage to your property or structures.



## **Birmingham City Council does not carry out tree work to assist you with:**

- Large or tall trees - we do not prune or fell trees just because they are large, tall or move naturally in the wind.
- Trees blocking light and general pruning
- Fallen leaves, seeds, pollen, nuts or fruit
- Neighbouring trees overhanging into your garden (unless dangerous or damaging your property)
- Poor TV reception
- Blocked guttering
- Bird Mess
- Insect activity/sap
- Removal of garden waste

## **Birmingham City Council will offer assistance to you if:**

- The tree is Dead, Dying or Dangerous (See our **Trees in Your Garden** Leaflet)
- The tree is causing direct damage, or in physical contact with a property. For example, branches are in contact with the roof, or there is damage to a structure from physical contact with trunk, crown or roots.

## **Additional Information:**

### **Overhanging branches**

If branches from a neighbour's tree are overhanging your property, you can cut them back yourself, unless the tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is in a conservation area.

You may prune the branches back to the boundary of your property but no further. The work must be done from your own property. You must dispose of any cuttings yourself, do not leave them on Council land.

Please also check that the tree is not subject to a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area, prior to undertaking any tree work. Use the following link to check <https://maps.birmingham.gov.uk/webapps/tpo/> or alternatively call the **Birmingham City Council Planning Department** on **0121 303 1115**.

## Japanese Knotweed

More information on **Japanese Knotweed** can be found online. If you have Japanese Knotweed in your garden, do not tackle it yourself, please report on line at: [www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20089/parks/167/grass\\_cutting\\_shrub\\_and\\_hedge\\_maintenance/5](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20089/parks/167/grass_cutting_shrub_and_hedge_maintenance/5)



Tree pruning advice

[www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Tree-Pruning](http://www.trees.org.uk/Help-Advice/Help-for-Tree-Owners/Guide-to-Tree-Pruning)

More tree pruning advice

[www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=233](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=233)

General gardening advice

[www.rhs.org.uk/advice](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice)

Growing your own vegetables

[www.rhs.org.uk/Advice/Grow-Your-Own/Vegetables](http://www.rhs.org.uk/Advice/Grow-Your-Own/Vegetables)

Create your own compost

[www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/startcomposting/?channel=paidsearch&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlp7uolYy07QlVcYBQBh3I7Q8qEAAYAiAAEgK0wPD\\_BwE](http://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/startcomposting/?channel=paidsearch&gclid=EAlaIQobChMlp7uolYy07QlVcYBQBh3I7Q8qEAAYAiAAEgK0wPD_BwE)

Find an approved tree surgeon

[www.trees.org.uk/Find-a-professional](http://www.trees.org.uk/Find-a-professional)

Accredited with the **Arboricultural Association**.

Check for Tree Preservation Orders/Conservation Area checks here:

<https://maps.birmingham.gov.uk/webapps/tpo/>

Land Registry can help identify the ownership of trees that are not located on BCC land

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry)

Tree Law

[www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/media/Trees-org.uk/Documents/GuideToTreesAndTheLaw-Web.pdf](http://www.trees.org.uk/Trees.org.uk/media/Trees-org.uk/Documents/GuideToTreesAndTheLaw-Web.pdf)

Help to identify trees and shrubs in your garden.

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/how-to-identify-trees/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlybrltMS77QIVSOztCh1tfwyFEAAYAiAAEgLdlvD\\_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/how-to-identify-trees/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlybrltMS77QIVSOztCh1tfwyFEAAYAiAAEgLdlvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds)

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# **Birmingham City Council Housing**

## **-Conditions of Tenancy**

### **11. GARDENS**

- 11.1 You must keep all garden areas for which you are responsible neat and tidy.
  - 11.2 If you fail to keep your garden tidy and free from rubbish, we may carry out any necessary work, charge you reasonable costs for doing this and/or ask the courts to order an injunction and/or possession of your home.
  - 11.7 If plants or trees do cause a nuisance, including overhanging neighbouring property, you must prune or remove them as necessary.
  - 11.8 You must not store rubbish, indoor furniture, household appliances, inflammable materials or gas in the garden area. If you do, we may remove the items and charge you a reasonable cost for doing this.
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