



TRIMMING MANGROVES: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



Mangroves serve as nurseries for game and sport fish, stabilize coastal shorelines and improve water quality. Mangroves have a vital role in healthy ecosystems and the economic wellbeing of coastal communities, and the trimming and alteration of mangroves is regulated by Florida's Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act.

Do I need a permit to trim mangroves on my property?

Florida laws allow property owners to trim mangroves to improve waterfront view or for access to navigable waterways, provided that trimming is limited to riparian mangrove fringes (RMF). Some, but not all, trimming activities require a permit.

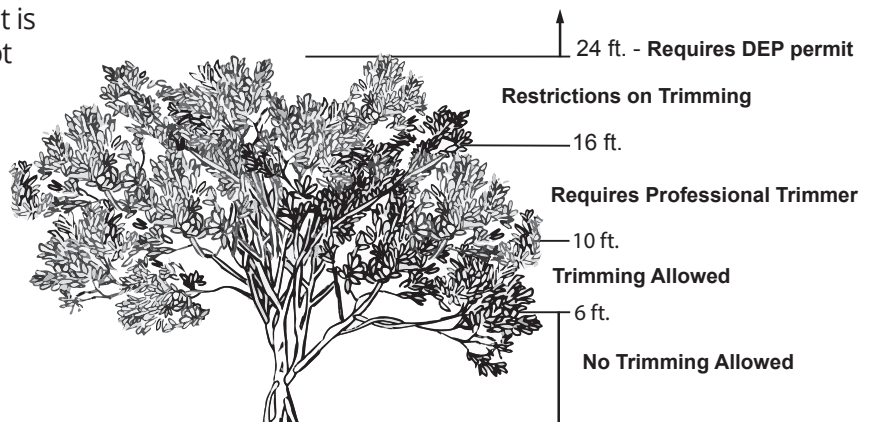
What is a riparian mangrove fringe?

Riparian Mangrove Fringes are areas where mangroves growing along the shoreline do not extend more than 50 feet waterward. A permit is not required if homeowners follow trimming guidelines. The RMF designation does not apply to areas within certain conservation easements, certain mitigation areas, or within certain types of public areas.

Trimming guidelines

- Homeowners may trim mangroves when the mangrove height exceeds six feet but is not taller than 10 feet. Mangroves cannot be trimmed below six feet.
- Mangroves over 10 feet tall require a professional mangrove trimmer.
- If trimming trees over 16 feet tall, trim in stages with no more than 25% removed annually.
- Trimming mangroves over 24 feet tall requires authorization from DEP.
- Homeowners can trim mangroves that were legally trimmed previously. Trimming must maintain the previous height and configuration.
- When the property shoreline is greater than 150 feet in length, 65% of the mangrove trees can be trimmed.

Allowable Trimming



All other mangrove trimming or alteration activities require a permit.

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Activities to avoid

- Defoliation (removing all or most of the leaves).
- Trimming mangrove roots.
- Trimming mangroves below 6 feet.
- Removing mangroves.

When do I need a professional mangrove trimmer?

You will need a professional mangrove trimmer in three instances:

- If mangroves are taller than 10 feet.
- If trimming under a general permit.
- If trimming to re-establish historical height and configuration within a riparian mangrove fringe.

A list of state authorized professional mangrove trimmers can be found at [FloridaDep.gov/ProfessionalMangroveTrimmers](https://www.floridadep.gov/ProfessionalMangroveTrimmers).

What are the penalties for illegal mangrove trimming?

For violations, property owners may be required to restore damaged mangroves, purchase mitigation credits, and/or be fined up to \$15,000.

Are my mangroves located within a local delegated jurisdiction?

If you reside in the following regions, check with your local delegated environmental officials before trimming mangroves. Residents located outside of these areas with mangrove trimming questions should contact a [regional DEP district office](#) for assistance.

Pinellas County

Environmental Management
22211 U.S. 19 N., Bldg. 10
Clearwater, FL 33765
727-464-4425

<https://www.pinellascounty.org/environmental/mangroves.htm>

Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission Wetlands Division

3629 Queen Palm Dr.
Tampa, FL 33619
813-627-2600

<https://www.epchc.org/divisions/wetlands/permits-exemptions>



THE BENEFITS OF MANGROVES

- Stabilize the coastline.
- Protect water quality.
- Reduce coastal flooding.
- Provide habitat for fish.
- Protect young fish from predators.
- Protect wildlife species.
- Serve as nesting area.

