

How You Can Help

Your cooperation with the vegetation management program results in reduced right-of-way maintenance costs, fewer power outages, faster repairs during outages and more reliable service. Following the planting guidelines previously mentioned when planting new trees or shrubs will allow your trees to be aesthetically pleasing while helping to reduce the need for future trimming.

Clay Electric tries to contact members when tree removal is necessary. However, some crews, such as mowing, spraying, and some pruning crews, move quickly through an area and contact is not always possible. Often, if someone is not home when contact is attempted and the pruning is routine (same kind of procedure performed during the previous cycle) the crew may re-clear while they are on site without actually speaking with the member.

Also, members who have pad-mounted transformers near their homes, used for underground service, can help by keeping shrubs at least three feet away from the sides and back of the transformer. Please consider the mature size of your landscaping plants before planting. The transformer's access door should remain completely unobstructed.

For more information on Clay Electric's vegetation management program, visit ClayElectric.com and click on the vegetation management link, or call Operations Vegetation Management.

Operations Vegetation Management
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District Offices

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Orange Park District Office

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Keeping the Lines Clear

Our Vegetation Management
system



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Maintaining a Clear Right-of-Way

Since trees and tree limbs are the most frequent causes of power outages for your cooperative, trees adjacent to Clay Electric's rights-of-way must be kept pruned. This helps us provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to members.

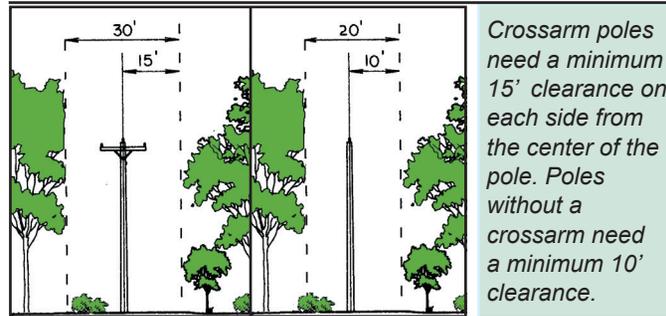
The vegetation management program is designed to reduce contact between trees and power lines as much as possible. Tree limbs touching lines can cause outages or momentary power fluctuations, affecting sensitive electronic devices such as clocks, TV equipment or personal computers.

The most important reason for keeping a clear right of way is member safety. Trees that grow too close to power lines can sway during thunderstorms or high winds and touch the lines. This gives electricity a path to the ground (which it is always seeking), causing a potentially serious fire and safety hazard.

To keep sufficient clearance between trees and lines, tree pruning is done on three- (city), four- (suburb), and five- (rural) year systematic cycles. Mowing of rights-of-way is done on a 4-year systematic cycle. Clay Electric also uses herbicides in some selected areas. Using herbicides enables Clay Electric to reduce its future mowing costs by up to 70% for that area. Much of the heavy underbrush which has been sprayed with herbicide is now covered with grasses, weeds, and an increasing number of wildflowers. This type of vegetation reduces maintenance costs while increasing available food sources for animals and birds. Keeping to a regular maintenance schedule ensures all right-of-way areas are maintained in a safe condition, reducing outages.

At Clay Electric there are more than 12,000

miles of primary distribution and transmission lines. The areas underneath and on each side of these lines must be kept clear of trees and tree branches. We need all members' cooperation to keep a minimum 10' to 15' cleared area on either side of primary power lines. Transmission line rights of way must be kept



clear of trees and tree branches to the width of the existing rights-of-way. This has proven to be the most economical and safest distance to maintain.

Another way members can help is when landscaping or planting new trees. **Clay Electric does not recommend planting shrubs or trees on the right-of-way.**

During outages, bad weather or at night when trouble occurs, gaining access to the power line with equipment and servicemen may damage shrubs located under the lines. However, if you must landscape adjacent

to the right-of-way, careful planning during plant selection and location is necessary to keep branches out of power lines once the shrubs or trees mature. This will allow the trees and shrubs to reach their maximum symmetry and beauty.

Before planting a tree, it is wise to consider what the mature height of that tree will be. The illustration below shows how far away different species of trees should be planted from power lines. For example, if landscaping is needed near the right-of-way area, choose low growth shrubs (example A) such as Golden Arborvitae, Dwarf Burford Holly, Hydrangea, Gardenia, Azalea, Boxwood, Pampas Grass, Juniper, Blue Vase, and Indian Hawthorn.

Smaller trees such as Dogwood, Tree Ligustrum, Loquat, Crab Apple or Crape Myrtle can be planted on right-of-way edges, at least 15' from power lines (example B). Medium trees, such as the Southern Red Cedar, Redbud, Loblolly Bay and Red Maple need to be planted at least 35' away from lines (example C). Large trees such as Oaks, Sweetgum, Sycamore, Southern Magnolia, Pecan and Hickory need to be planted at least 45' away (example D) from overhead lines. Trees planted too close to the lines (example E) will always be misshapen and aesthetically unpleasing by unavoidable pruning of limbs to prevent interference with power lines.

