

To : Property Owners, Developers, Builders, Contractors and Design Professionals  
From: DeKalb County Environmental Land Development Section

**Re: Guidelines for Buffer Plantings and Restoration**

The following guidelines for the re-vegetation of disturbed areas of required buffers, or the establishment of planted buffers should be utilized in all buffer plans submitted.

Installed plant material shall be installed in the following proportions:

- 25% overstory trees
- 25% understory trees
- 25% shrubs
- 25% herbaceous plants (grasses, ground covers, or perennials)
- Highly invasive ground covers such as English Ivy should be avoided.

Plants in each category shall have the following square foot values:

Overstory trees	200 square feet each
Understory trees	100 square feet each
Shrubs	25 square feet each
Ground covers	4 square feet each
Perennials	4 square feet each
Grasses	square foot area of coverage

Minimum acceptable size of plant material:

All trees	2 inch caliper
Shrubs	3 gallon nursery container
Ground covers	sprigs 2 feet on center
Perennials	3 inch pots
Grass	sod, seed & straw or hydroseed

The following plant material, although listed as understory trees in the Dekalb County Tree Ordinance plant list, shall be considered shrubs for the purpose of buffer plantings:

Alnus serralta	Alder
Aesculu pavia	Red Buckeye
Hamamelis virginiana	Witch-hazel
Myrica cerifera	Waxmyrtle
Osmanthus americanus	Devilwood
Styrax americana	Snowbell

Ilex species are so varied that some may be considered small trees, however most will be considered as shrubs.

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

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*(Cont'd.)*

The plantings shall consist of no more than 25 % evergreen species of trees, and no more than 25% of any single species of trees or shrubs.

All plant material is to be compatible with the environment in which it is to be placed. Stream buffers, flood plains and wetlands should receive plants suitable for low areas. Conversely, upland areas should receive upland plants.

Indigenous plant material is preferable in stream buffer, flood plain and wetland situations.

Buffers where conditional zoning calls for specific species or types of plant material to be used may be exempt from these guidelines.

Plan submission and approval is required on all proposed planted buffers, and unauthorized buffer encroachments. Plans to be designed by a qualified professional.