

Tree regulations

Trees and branches falling onto lines are a major cause of power outages in Auckland. Power lines and trees can get along – if you choose the right species and plant them the right distance from the lines. By planting the right sorts of trees and shrubs near network power lines (typically within 8m), you can help avoid the risk of power outages to your neighbourhood.

Trees must be kept clear of network power lines, as required by the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003. Under these regulations, tree owners are responsible for the costs of keeping trees trimmed and outside the growth limit zones around network power lines.

Tree owners may face penalties for failing to keep trees clear of lines and may be responsible for the costs of damage a tree causes to power lines or equipment.

The Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 (Tree Regulations) imposes restrictions on tree trimming within 4m of network lines.

For more information about the regulations and your responsibilities as a tree owner, please visit:

www.vector.co.nz/our-services/electricity/trees-lines

Clear to the sky from 17 October 2026:

For some power lines, the growth limit zone extends vertically above the line as well as around it. This is known as “clear to the sky” and means vegetation must also be kept clear above the line. From 17 October 2026, clear to the sky applies to all non-urban power lines, including lines at 11 kV or below.

Upcoming changes to tree regulation

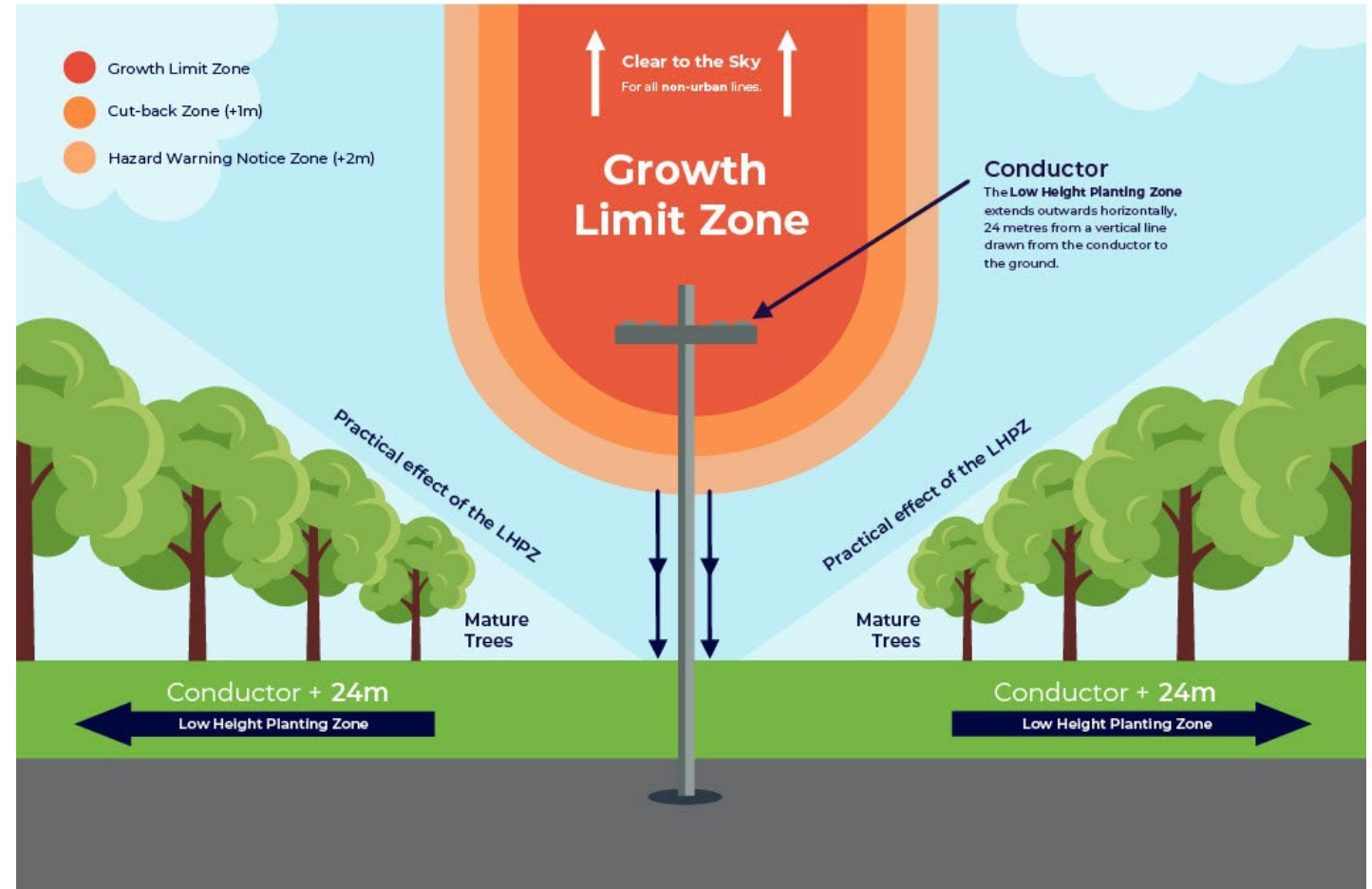
From 23 July 2027: Low Height Planting Zone

On unforested land outside urban areas, the Low Height Planting Zone extends horizontally up to 24 metres from a vertical line drawn from the power line conductor to the ground.

An owner or occupier must not plant, or allow someone else to plant, a tree within this zone if they reasonably believe its mature height will exceed its distance from the power line.

The rule does not apply to existing forest land, urban areas, shelterbelts, or land administered under the Conservation Act 1987.

If a tree is planted in breach of this rule, the owner or occupier may be liable for resulting damage and may have to meet future cutting, trimming or removal costs. A no-interest tree notice or dispensation is not available for a tree planted unlawfully in the Low Height Planting Zone. The no-interest process is also unavailable where a self-sown tree becomes established in the zone and is not managed.



Upcoming changes to tree regulation

From 23 July 2028: Treefall Hazard Notices

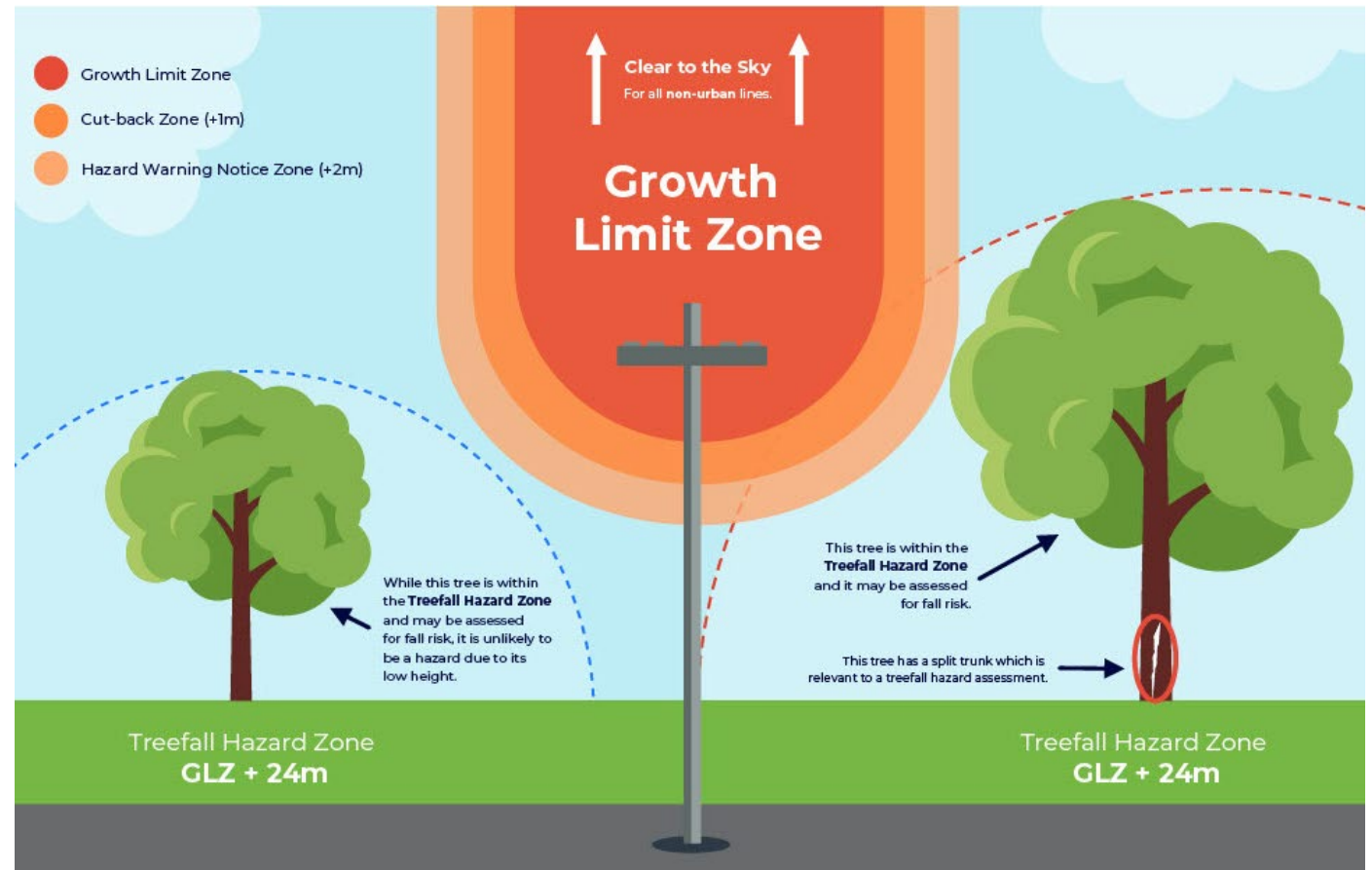
The Treefall Hazard Zone extends 24 metres horizontally from the edge of the Growth Limit Zone. Being within the zone does not automatically mean a tree is hazardous or must be removed.

If a tree within the treefall hazard zone is assessed as posing a moderate or high risk to a power line, Vector may issue a Treefall Hazard Notice requiring the tree to be removed. The assessment must include written advice from a suitably qualified and experienced arborist about the likelihood of the tree falling.

A high-hazard tree must be removed within 25 working days and a moderate-hazard tree within 45 working days. The tree owner is responsible for ensuring the tree is removed within the required timeframe and must tell Vector the time and location of the removal.

Vector will generally meet the reasonable costs of removing the tree and associated debris. Exceptions apply, including where the tree owner refuses consent for Vector to enter the property and remove the tree, or where the tree was planted in breach of the Low Height Planting Zone requirements.

If a tree owner disagrees with a moderate or high hazard assessment, they will have 10 working days to apply to the Tree Arbitrator to dispute the assessment. The Tree Arbitrator will also be able to consider disputes about reasonable removal costs in certain circumstances.



Planting guidance

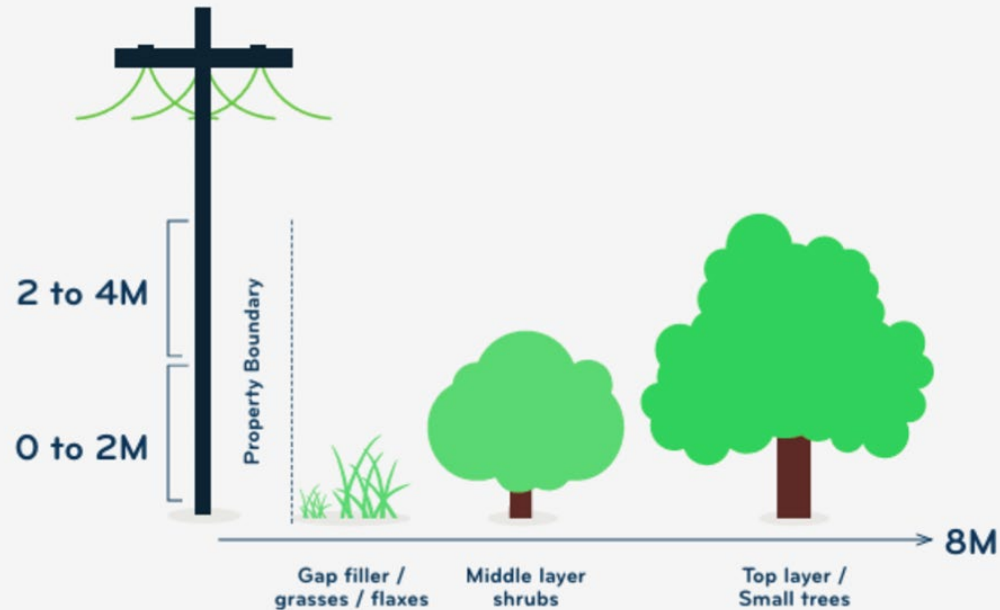
There are some simple rules and suggestions to follow if you're considering planting near power lines.

- Buy smart – use our table of species or buy plants with similar growth habits.
- If in doubt, ask your local nursery for help – let them know where you live to help with suitable species selection
- Use the height rules to determine which types of plants are best for your situation
- Native species are often the best to plant because they are used to our local conditions
- Exotic species (non-native), especially trees, are faster growing and need more care. If not maintained they will become hazardous.
- A mix of height and types work best – with flaxes and grasses planted near network lines, followed by shrubs and trees further away
- Mixing species fills gaps, reduces maintenance (especially weeds) and provides wildlife habitat
- Slower growing species are best – you can buy larger grades to get a hedge effect quicker
- Fast growing species such as Eucalyptus, Pines and Poplars are unsuitable as they grow rapidly and can require two cuts per year
- Fast growing species may also need to be removed and can become hazards by shedding limbs and bark
- Fast growing species such as Eucalyptus, Pines and Poplars are unsuitable as they grow rapidly and can require two cuts per year
- Fast growing species may also need to be removed and can become hazards by shedding limbs and bark

Suitable trees and vegetation for planting near power lines

Our species list is a guide only. It is made up of hardy, adaptable, easy to grow and buy species that are also good for wildlife from bees to birds.

EXAMPLE OF PLANTING WITHIN 8M OF POWER LINES



Botanical name	Common name	Height x Width	Native	Exotic
Gap fillers		Grasses/flaxes/smaller plants		
Apodasmia similis	Oioi, jointed rush	1.5m x 1m	x	
Astelia trinervia	Kauri grass	2m x 2m	x	
Cortaderia splendens	Coastal toetoe	2.5m x 2.5m	x	
Machaerina sinclairii	Tuhara	1m x 1.5m	x	
Phormium cookianum	Coastal flax (Wharariki)	1.5m x 2m	x	
Phormium tenax	Harakeke	3m x 3m	x	
Azalea	Most varieties	1.5m x 1m		
Hemerocallis	Day lilies (most cultivars except H. fulva)	1m x 1.5m		x
Hydrangea	Most varieties	1.5m x 1.5m		x
Leucospermum	Most varieties	1.5m x 1.5m		x
Pieris	Lily of the valley shrub	1.5m x 1m		x
The Middle Layer		Shrubs		
Coprosma lucida	Shining karamu	3m x 2m	x	
Corokia cotoneaster	Kumerahou	2m x 1.5m	x	
Leucopogon fasciculatus	Mingimingi	2m x 1.5m	x	
Pomaderris kumeraho	Kumerahou	2mx1.5m	x	
Macropiper excelsum	Kawakawa	2m x 1.5m	x	
Solanum laciniatum	Poroporo	3m x 4m	x	
Camellia	Most varieties	3m x 1.5m		x
Feijoa	Most varieties	3m x 2m		x
Hibiscus	Most varieties	2.5m x 1.5m		x
Michelia figo	Port wine magnolia	3m x 2.5m		x
Malus floribunda	Crabapple	3m x 2.5m		x
Choisa ternata	Mexican orange blossom	2m x 1.5m		x
The Top layer		Small Trees		
Coprosma repens	Mirror plant, taupata	4m x 2m	x	
Hebe stricta	Koromiko	4m x 2.5m	x	
Olearia furfuracea	Akepiro	4m x 2m	x	
Pseudopanax lessonii	Coastal five finger, houpapa	4m x 2m	x	
Pittosporum tenuifolium	Pittosporum mountain green	4m x 2m	x	
Callistemon	Bottlebrush (most cultivars)	4.5m x 1.5m		x
Grevillea	Various cultivars small tree and shrub size	To 4m x 2.5m		x
Protea	Most varieties	3m x 1.5m		x
Telopea	Waratahs - Most varieties	3m x 2m		x
Viburnum tinus lucidum	Laurustinus	4m x 1.5m		x