



January 22, 2025

The Meadows

At World Golf Village

Saint Augustine, FL 32092

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Our Community's Oak Trees: Understanding and Protecting Our Natural Heritage

Dear Neighbors,

Many of you have admired the majestic oak trees that line our entranceway, providing shade, beauty, and a sense of established elegance to our community. These trees are a mix of Live oaks and Laurel oaks, each with their own characteristics and life cycles that affect our community's landscape planning.

Understanding Our Oaks

Live oaks and Laurel oaks may look similar at first glance, but they have important differences. Live oaks are the giants of our local landscape, capable of growing up to 80 feet tall with spreads of 100 feet. These remarkable trees can live for over 150 years, becoming more valuable to our community with each passing decade. Laurel oaks, while still impressive, typically reach heights and spreads of about 60 feet and have shorter lifespans of 50 to 150 years.

The Challenge of Internal Decay

A particular concern with our Laurel oaks is their susceptibility to internal decay and wood rot, which can affect both the main trunk and large branches. This presents a complex management challenge because a tree can appear healthy with a full green canopy while harboring significant internal decay. The decay process typically progresses from the inside out, creating hollow spaces within the trunk or branches that can compromise the tree's structural integrity.

Signs of Potential Problems:

- Visible cavities or openings in the trunk or major branches
- Mushrooms or fungal growth on the trunk or near the base
- Cracking or splitting in major branches
- Dead or dying branches in the canopy
- Leaning trunks or sudden changes in tree position

Making Difficult Decisions

Determining when a tree or branch has become a safety risk requires careful evaluation. While some decay can be managed through pruning and maintenance, there comes a

point when removal becomes necessary to protect our community's safety, particularly given Florida's vulnerability to high winds and storms. These decisions are never made lightly and always involve consultation with certified arborists who can assess the extent of decay and potential risks.

Planning for the Future

When removal of a Laurel oak becomes necessary, we have an opportunity to replant with Live oaks, which offer greater longevity and storm resistance. However, it's important to understand that this transition comes with a temporary aesthetic impact. A newly planted Live oak will take many years to develop the impressive canopy of a mature tree. This reality requires us to balance immediate safety concerns with long-term landscape planning.

Proactive Management Strategy

Our HOA board is committed to:

- Regular professional assessments of tree health
- Early intervention when problems are identified
- Strategic planning for gradual tree replacement
- Maintaining detailed records of tree health and maintenance
- Communication with residents about tree management decisions

Your Role

As community members, your observations are valuable. Please report any concerns about our trees to the HOA board, particularly if you notice:

- New openings or cavities in trunks or branches
- Fallen branches or debris
- Changes in tree appearance or positioning
- Signs of decay or damage

By working together and understanding both the immediate challenges and long-term opportunities, we can maintain the beauty and safety of our community's landscape while planning for its future.

For questions or concerns, please contact the HOA at info@themeadowswgv.com.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors

The Meadows at World Golf Village

The Meadows at Saint Johns Owners Association, Inc.

Email: info@themeadowswgv.com