

Oakland Zoo Tree Branch Donation FAQ's

What kind of trees do the animals eat?

The animals here eat all kinds of leafy branches, but some species are toxic and so we cannot accept them. Some species are edible but the animals just don't like it! Please see our edibles and toxic list below for details on what we accept or don't accept. If your species is not on the list, we probably don't accept it.

PLANTS COMMONLY USED

Acacia
Alder/Ash
Apple
Baileyana (Feathery Acacia)
Bamboo – leafy stalks only
Birch
Bird of Paradise
Bradford Pear
Carob
Cotoneaster
Deciduous fruit trees
Elm spp *Ulmus*
Eugenia
Oak
Olive
Palm frond (green only)
Plum
Poplar
Maple, Silver, Sugar, Japanese
Mulberry
Sumac
Sweetgum spp *Liquidambar*
Willow spp *Salix*

PLANTS NOT USED- TOXIC

Bottlebrush
Conifers
Eucalyptus
Elderberry
California Bay
Horsechestnut
Laurel
Oleander (Nerium)
Maple, Red spp *acer rubum*
Myrtle
Pepperwood
Podocarpus
Pittosporum
Privet
Pyracantha
Rhododendron
Walnut
Juniper
Guava
Drosinia
Pyracantha

How do I get in contact with a staff member to discuss my donation?

Please call (510) 632-9525 extension 266. Keepers are very busy taking care of the animals, but someone will call you back within 24 hours of your message.

I don't know what kind of tree I have, can you help me identify it?

Maybe. E-mail photos (gkinzley@oaklandzoo.org) showing the leaves up close and the whole tree to us, and we can try and ID the tree. If it is something we do not recognize then we will not accept it. Unfortunately, we do not have the time or staffing to make house calls to try and identify trees in person.

Will you come pick up my branches?

Unfortunately at this time the keepers do not have the time or resources to come and pick up brush from residential households as we are busy taking care of the animals. We really rely on deliveries if you have the means, or for the tree companies to deliver.

What if I'm having a tree company remove -or trim tree(s)?

Consider using our Preferred Tree Companies:

Garcia's Pro Tree (510) 915-0201

Duda Tree Service (510) 531-5261

Luis' Tree Service (510) 575-5667

Miguel Terra Petra Gardens (510) 205-9647

Green Terra Tree Service (510) 436-5403

Torogoz Landscaping LLC (510) 575-8694

These small, local companies have been working with the Zoo for years and may bring the appropriate edible browse to the Zoo for our animals.

If you are not able to use one of our preferred companies, please let your tree company know in advance that you would like to donate branches to the Zoo.

Here is the required criteria:

1. Browse identified as an edible and palatable species
2. No dead/dried brush
3. Branches freshly cut within 24 hrs., 5-8 feet in length, no larger than 3-4 inches in diameter, no logs or trunks

Will staff come cut at my house?

We do not cut at residential households due to time constraints.

If I trim my tree, how should I trim the branches?

Please leave the branches as long as possible, preferably 5-8 feet in length. The animals prefer the branches long and it is also physically easier for the staff to feed out. Choppy, small, branches are difficult to manage.

I use pesticides/insecticides/herbicides, can you use my tree?

We only accept trees grown without pesticide/insecticide/herbicide, for the safety of our animals.

I cut my tree last week and then saw you were looking for branches...it's available but dry. Do you want it?

No. We do not accept dead or dried up trimmings. The animals will not eat it. The browse will need to be cut within 24 hours of drop off or pick up.

I'm at the zoo with my trimmings right now, can I drop it off?

Maybe, if you have arrived between 9am-2:30pm and your browse meets our criteria. A security officer will meet you and call the Animal Care staff on the radio to see if they are available to accept your load. If a keeper is able to meet you at that time an officer will direct you to the proper area and a keeper will meet you to inspect the browse and help you unload if needed. Please be cautioned that the drop off area can be muddy during the winter season and may be difficult to drive a vehicle on. Please wait for staff to arrive before dropping off. It is better if you call in advance so we can plan to be available.

What time can I drop off the brush?

Our Animal Care team are available to accept browse donations between 9am to 2:30pm Monday-Sunday.

I just cut my browse but can't drop it off by 2:30pm. What if I can't drop off during the above time frame?

We ask that you wait until the next day to deliver. All browse needs to be inspected for quality control before it is dropped off.

Will I get to see the animals up close if I drop off the brush?

While we are so happy to accept your delivery, you will not get to see an animal up close or behind the scenes.

I contacted you about donating my tree and was told you could not use it, why?

There are several possible reasons we may not be able to accept a browse donation. If you were in contact with a keeper, they should have explained the requirements. Your tree may have been turned down because it is not on our list, which is usually because it is toxic to our animals. There may also be occasions when we get so many trees donated that we simply cannot accommodate them all and have to turn donations away. We also do not pick up small truckloads.

I have excess fruit/vegetables, can I donate those as well?

Yes, we do accept donations of produce from local residents and farms. However we ask that those are delivered. We will put you in touch with our commissary team to coordinate and get more details.

Is my plant donation tax-deductible?

Yes. Tax deduction receipts are available upon request.

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