

No more pickup of non-street tree debris

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Violators will be cited for littering.

Officials are hoping property owners heed the letter sent in their August electric bills about pick up of branches and yard rubbish on city streets.

“Only limbs that fall in the street during a storm are the responsibility of the city in which we will continue to clear and haul off,” the letter states.

Those branches are from “street trees” or trees that grow in city right of way between the street and sidewalk.

If it’s determined that non-street tree limbs or other yard rubbish is dragged to the street, property owners will receive notice from city officials to remove the debris, said city administrator Bruce Clymer.

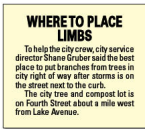
Property owners who don’t comply will be issued a citation for littering, he said.

Branches and yard rubbish can be taken to a tree and compost lot on west Fourth Street.

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City crews have never been responsible for hauling away non-street tree debris but have done so in recent years.

However Clymer said hauling branches and rubbish for more than one day takes manpower away from other duties such as street tarring and painting, electrical, water and sewer maintenance and more.

Gothenburg City Council members decided to send the letters since city officials said some homeowners continue to drag limbs from their property to the street which are not on city right of way.

City services director Shane Gruber said the city crew picks up tree debris from streets the day after a storm.

“So the smart thing for people to do is to get branches out there right after a storm,” Gruber said.

However he said some property owners continue to pile branches and other yard rubbish—such as hedge trimmings—in the street three to four days later.

“It’s their responsibility to take care of them,” he said.

Gruber said the street crew can determine whether branches are from street trees or from other trees on the property.

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Gothenburg police officers will also be on the lookout for non-street trees waiting for city pick up, he said.

Clymer said the policy might be a change from what many citizens have expected in the past.

“We only hope you understand that we feel our duty of working towards better city services outweigh what we feel should be the property owner’s responsibility,” Clymer said.

He added that city crews will continue picking up leaves placed by the curb this fall.

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