

MALACAÑANG
Manila

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 953

**REQUIRING THE PLANTING OF TREES IN CERTAIN PLACES AND PENALIZING
UNAUTHORIZED CUTTING, DESTRUCTION, DAMAGING AND INJURING OF
CERTAIN TREES, PLANTS AND VEGETATION.**

WHEREAS, the planting of trees on lands adjoining the edge of rivers and creeks is both a measure of beautification and reforestation; and

WHEREAS, the planting of trees along roads and areas intended for the common use of owners of lots in subdivisions will provide shade and healthful environment therein;

NOW THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, do hereby order and decree:

SECTION 1. The following shall plant trees:

1. Every person who owns land adjoining a river or creek, shall plant trees extending at least five meters on his land adjoining the edge of the bank of the river or creek, except when such land, due to its permanent improvement, cannot be planted with trees;
2. Every owner of an existing subdivision shall plant trees in the open spaces required to be reserved for the common use and enjoyment of the owners of the lots therein as well as along all roads and service streets. The subdivision owner shall consult the Bureau of Forest Development as to the appropriate species of trees to be planted and the manner of planting them; and
3. Every holder of a license agreement, lease, license or permit from the Government, involving occupation and utilization of forest or grazing land with a river or creek therein, shall plant trees extending at least twenty (20) meters from each edge of the bank of the river or creek.

The persons herein above required to plant trees shall take good care of them, and, from time to time, remove any tree planted by them in their respective areas which has grown very old, is diseased, or is defective, and replant with trees their respective areas whenever necessary.

SECTION 2. Every owner of land subdivided into residential/commercial/industrial lots after the effectivity of this Decree shall reserve, develop and maintain not less than thirty percent (30%) of the total area of the subdivision, exclusive of roads, service streets and alleys, as open space for parks and recreational areas.

No plan for a subdivision shall be approved by the Land Registration Commission or any office or agency of the government unless at least thirty percent (30%) of the total area of the subdivision, exclusive of roads, service streets and alleys, is reserved as open space for parks and recreational areas and the owner thereof undertakes to develop such open space, within three (3) years from the approval of the subdivision plan, in accordance with the development plan approved by the Bureau of Forest Development and to maintain such parks and recreational areas.

SECTION 3. Any person who cuts, destroys, damages or injures, naturally growing or planted trees of any kind, flowering or ornamental plants and shrubs, or plants of scenic, aesthetic and ecological values, along public roads, in plazas, parks other than national parks, school premises or in any other public ground or place, or on banks of river or creeks, or along roads in land subdivisions or areas therein for the common use of the owners of lots therein, or any species of vegetation or forest cover found therein shall, be punished with imprisonment for not less than six months and more than two years, or a fine of not less than five hundred pesos and not more than five thousand pesos, or with both such imprisonment and fine at the discretion of the court, except when the cutting, destroying, damaging or injuring is necessary for public safety or the pruning thereof is necessary to enhance beauty, and only upon the approval of the duly authorized representative of the head of agency or political subdivision having jurisdiction therein, or of the Director of Forest Development in the case of trees on banks of rivers and cracks, or of the owner of the land subdivision in the case of trees along roads and in other areas therein for the common use of owners of lots therein. If the offender is a corporation, partnership or association, the penalty shall be imposed upon the officer or officers thereof responsible for the offense, and if such officer or officers are aliens, in addition to the penalty herein prescribed, he or they shall be deported without further proceedings before the Commission on Immigration and deportation. Nothing in this Decree shall prevent the cancellation of a license agreement, lease, license or permit from the Government, of such cancellation is prescribed therein or in Government regulations for such offense.

SECTION 4. Any person who shall violate any provision of Section one thereof, or any regulation promulgated thereunder, shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than six months but not more than two years, or with a fine of not less than five hundred pesos but not more than five thousand pesos, or with both such imprisonment and fine at the discretion of the court. If the offender is a public officer or employee, he shall, in addition, be dismissed from the public service and disqualified perpetually to hold public office.

SECTION 5. Any person who shall violate the provision of Section 2 thereof, or any regulation promulgated thereunder, shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than two (2) years but not more than five (5) years, or with a fine equivalent to the value, at current valuation, of the area representing thirty percent (30%) of the total area of the subdivision, or both such fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the Court.

SECTION 6. The Director of Forest Development shall issue rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Decree.

SECTION 7. All laws, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 8. This Decree shall take effect upon its promulgation.

Done in the City of Manila, this 6th day of July in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-six.

(SGD.) FERDINAND E. MARCOS

President
Republic of the Philippines

By the President:

(SGD.) J. C. TUVEM
Presidential Assistant

CERTIFIED COPY:

(SGD.) MELQUIADES T. DE LA CRUZ, CESO II
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