



City of Ballwin Residential Street Tree Program Tree Guide

The purpose of this guide is to assist the homeowner in identifying a planting space and caring for their new street tree.

Before an application for planting is submitted the property owner must determine if they have and acceptable space for a tree. The space must meet the following requirements:

1. The planting area consists of the grass area between the street and the sidewalk and must be a minimum of five (5) feet wide.
2. Trees shall not be planted closer than three (3) feet to any curb.
3. Trees shall not be planted within twenty-five (25) feet of street lights.
4. Trees shall not be planted within ten (10) feet of street inlets or manholes.
5. Trees shall not be planted within thirty (30) feet of an existing tree.
6. No trees shall be planted directly underneath overhead utility lines.
7. No trees shall be planted within the sight triangle at an intersection that at maturity, have bottom branches lower than seven (8) feet above the elevation of the adjacent pavement.

If the homeowner has a lawn sprinkler system, an underground electronic dog fence, or any other system located within the area where a tree is to be planted, the homeowner is responsible for marking these systems, and relocating the systems at their expense, as necessary.

As part of this program the Urban Forester will select a species that is appropriate for the site. Many plant problems are a result of overpopulation of one species. To avoid this we will choose a tree that has not been overplanted in your area. Should you choose to plant a tree on your own in the right-of-way you must notify the Urban Forester at 636-207-2382.

The city's contractor will install all trees. When installing the tree, the contractor will stake the tree, water it, and put down a layer of mulch. The tree will have a one-year warranty starting the month it was planted.

Think in terms of prevention when caring for your tree. A healthy tree has everything it needs to defend itself from natural predators and urban stressors. Watering the tree weekly is the single most important task.

In order to participate in the City of Ballwin Street Tree Planting Program, a homeowner must agree to properly care for their tree as outlined in the following section. Please read the following "Caring

for Your Tree” section thoroughly before you sign the tree care agreement on the Street Tree Program Application. Any trees that die due to lack of care or improper care will not be replaced under the one year warranty.

Caring For Your New Street Tree

Please read this section in its entirety before signing the Street Tree Application. Homeowners must provide proper care for their street trees in order to qualify for the program.

Watering: The single most important thing a newly transplanted tree needs is water. Generally, new trees should get at least four inches of water per week. **An irrigation system does not supply enough water for a new tree. For the first few years the tree will need supplemental water.** Water should be administered slowly in order to allow it to penetrate the soil deeply. Afterwards, the soil should be allowed to dry somewhat before the next watering. This encourages a deep root system. A good way to water is to use a back and forth sprinkler or with a hose set to trickle under the tree’s canopy. Leave the water on for 2-4 hours.

Mulching: The tree will be mulched by the city’s contractor when it is installed. If you choose to re-mulch later, spread an even layer of mulch underneath the tree’s canopy. This layer should be no deeper than 4 inches, and if you like to add fresh mulch every year try not to exceed a 2” layer each year. Piling mulch up against the trunk of the tree, creating a “volcano” effect, is a very common mistake and is actually detrimental to tree health. Mulch should never touch the trunk of the tree because it can hold moisture against the trunk and cause decay and rot.

Staking: The tree will be staked by the city’s contractor when it is installed. The homeowner is responsible for removing the stakes. The stakes should be taken off after one year, or sooner if possible.

Pruning: City crews are trained in proper pruning methods and they will structurally prune your tree for three years before placing it on a five year trimming cycle. The goal of structural pruning is to establish a strong trunk that has evenly spaced branches. This ensures that your tree will be stronger in future years and less susceptible to damage during storms. See the “resources” section below for a great document about structural pruning available through the Missouri Dept. of Conservation.

Avoid pruning in the first year that the tree has been planted unless you see broken or diseased branches. These should always be removed right away.

Fertilizing: For the most part, fertilizer is not necessary. If you choose to use it there are many types available at your local garden center, or call a tree care professional. When using fertilizer, always follow the directions on the package. Too much fertilizer can cause much more damage than not using any at all.

Additional Resources

The information in this booklet was obtained from the Missouri Department of Conservation Urban Trees booklet, which is available on the website at mdc.mo.gov

Other Useful Sites:

- Missouri Department of Conservation-urban forestry site
 - www.mdc.mo.gov/landwater-care/homeowners/backyard-tree-care
- National Arbor Day Foundation
 - www.arborday.org
- Heartland Tree Alliance
 - www.righttreerightplace.com
- Missouri Botanic Garden
 - www.missouribotanicalgarden.org