

# FREE TREES

Did you know that the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department gives away free trees?



**TREE CITY USA®**

**Since 1978**



The **Neighborhood Tree Planting Program**, operated by the **Forestry Section**, helps to reduce summer temperatures and storm water runoff, improve air quality, beautify neighborhoods and increase property values. The program provides **free 5-gallon trees** for planting in the parkway (the strip between the curb and the sidewalk, or typically 10ft behind the curb if no sidewalk is present) when neighborhood groups sign up 25-75 residents. Participants will need to plant the trees, or arrange for volunteers to help, and water the newly planted street trees until established.

For more information, visit:

[www.fortworthtexas.gov/forestry](http://www.fortworthtexas.gov/forestry)

Or contact:

Craig Fox

817-392-5729

[craig.fox@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:craig.fox@fortworthtexas.gov)



# Neighborhood Tree Planting Program



## An Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Neighborhood Tree Planting Program. Trees are an important resource in a growing community like ours. Trees perform important vital functions such as filtering pollution from our air and in turn, producing oxygen while storing carbon. They also help prevent and mitigate flooding and erosion. Many trees provide harvestable products such as oils, fruits, nuts, wood, paper and other useful items. Wildlife of all kinds including mammals, birds, insects and micro-organisms use trees for food and shelter.

Many economic and social benefits may be derived from trees as well. Their presence can increase property value, stimulate economic development, reduce incidents of crime, reduce stress and create a sense of place. We enjoy their shade and cooling effects and trees even help us save energy! Trees also soften the harsh lines of buildings, provide privacy and help buffer noise and wind.

Now that you know some of the many benefits of trees, we hope you'll consider helping to coordinate a tree planting event for your neighborhood. The following pages contain more information about the program. In addition, you may be interested in some of the contacts and resources below.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 817/392-5729 or [craig.fox@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:craig.fox@fortworthtexas.gov).

Sincerely,

Craig Fox, Forester










## Useful Contacts

Fort Worth Parks & Community Services Department.....	817/392-5700
<i><a href="http://www.fortworthtexas.gov/pacs">www.fortworthtexas.gov/pacs</a></i>	
Forestry Section (to report dead, damaged, or trees needing work on public property).....	817/392-5738
<i><a href="http://www.fortworthtexas.gov/forestry">www.fortworthtexas.gov/forestry</a></i>	
Neighborhood Tree Planting Program, Urban Forester.....	817/392-5729
Tree Grant Program (large container/ B&B trees), Urban Forester.....	817/392-5739
Fort Worth Botanic Garden.....	817/871-7686
<i><a href="http://www.fwbjg.com">www.fwbjg.com</a></i>	
Texas Forest Service, Oak Wilt Specialist.....	817/579-5773
<i><a href="http://www.texasoakwilt.org">www.texasoakwilt.org</a></i>	
Texas A&M Forest Service, Regional Urban Forester.....	817/926-8203
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (Tarrant County).....	817/884-1944
<i><a href="http://tarrant.tamu.edu">http://tarrant.tamu.edu</a></i>	

# Neighborhood Tree Planting Program



## The Process: Step by Step

	<p>Trees are provided free of charge, but are required to be planted within the parkway (city-owned right-of-way). Species provided are native or adapted, grown in 5-gallon pots and are chosen based on desirable characteristics for growing along the street.</p>
	<p>Designate a Neighborhood Coordinator, the link between the City's Forester and the residents. All information flows back and forth through this person. Consider block captains to assist the Neighborhood Coordinator when working with a large group.</p>
	<p>Spread the word about the program to the rest of the neighborhood. Going door-to-door, using social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc), HOA newsletters and group meetings are all great ways to build interest in the program.</p>
	<p>Collect names of residents interested in participating. The sign-up sheet contains a section for homeowners to rank their preferred species. The number of trees provided for each resident is based on available space and will be determined by the Forester during the marking process.</p>
	<p>Turn in your sign-up sheets to the Forester and schedule a delivery date. There may be a waiting list so the earlier the better. Fall is the best time to plant and usually has the shortest waiting period. We will deliver the trees to one designated site in the neighborhood (often the Coordinator's backyard) for distribution by the Coordinator.</p>
	<p>About 10-14 days prior to your delivery date, the Forester will mark optimal planting locations for the participating residents. A bright orange dot will be painted on the ground accompanied by a neon green flag for each potential location. In rare cases, some residents may not have adequate space for a tree in the parkway.</p>
	<p>Deliveries are generally scheduled for Fridays at 10am. We will deliver all the trees and ensure that they are sorted by species and labeled. The Forester will provide hard copies of the marking results, planting brochures and any other requested info.</p>
	<p>Homeowners pick-up their allotted trees from the Coordinator and take them home to plant. Many groups use the day after delivery as a chance to distribute their trees and mingle with neighbors. Recruit volunteers to assist those who are unable to plant the trees themselves. Gather marking flags and empty containers for reuse by the City.</p>
	<p>Once properly planted, ensure that everyone's hard work pays off. Keep your trees well-watered for the first 2 years, maintain an adequate mulch layer, limit any pruning to an absolute minimum and keep weed-eaters away from tender trunks.</p>

## FAQs — Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Why does the tree have to be planted between the sidewalk and the curb?**

**A:** *Supplied trees are grown using City resources and therefore must remain on public property to avoid misappropriation of funds. The Neighborhood Tree Planting Program provides trees for residential parkways, which are property of the City of Fort Worth.*

**Q: Why are we using City resources to plant trees?**

**A:** *The trees provided by the Forestry Section are grown using municipal gas well revenue, fees from illegal tree removals, and donated funds. Trees are a tremendously valuable asset to the City, contributing millions of dollars in benefits relating to: storm water runoff, air and water quality, urban heat island effect and property values.*

**Q: Who plants the trees?**

**A:** *Each neighborhood is responsible for planting their own trees, which typically means that each homeowner plants the trees designated for the parkway in front of their home. The trees provided are in 5-gallon containers, which is a very manageable size to plant. The size of hole required for a 5-gallon tree is, on average, less than a foot deep and about 2 feet wide. Volunteers may be recruited by the neighborhood group to assist with planting.*

**Q: Many of the trees offered by the Forestry Section can grow quite large; won't these trees damage the sidewalk?**

**A:** *While many factors affect how and where tree roots grow, the trees currently supplied via the Neighborhood Tree Planting Program have been carefully selected, in part for their rooting habits.*

**Q: Is there anything I can do to help prevent sidewalk damage?**

**A:** *By planting approved species, utilizing proper planting techniques, and by watering slowly and deeply rather than light, frequent application, the likelihood of sidewalk damage is greatly diminished.*

**Q: How much water does my tree need?**

**A:** *Typically, a 5-gallon tree will require an average of four to five gallons of water per week. The water should be applied slowly and deeply and only once a week. During the hottest and driest summer months, watering twice a week may be necessary.*

**Q: I have a sprinkler system that covers the parkway, too. Won't that be sufficient?**

**A:** *Trees should not be watered as often as the lawn. It is best to hand water or slowly soak the trees which encourages a deeper, stronger root system.*

**Q: Should I fertilize my tree?**

**A:** *Trees provided by the Neighborhood Tree Planting Program are native or adapted to our soils and climate and do not need to be fertilized.*

**Q: Why do some homes receive only 1 tree while others receive 2 or more?**

**A:** *Many times, objects such as water meter boxes, light poles, mailboxes, drain cleanouts or other plants and trees make it impossible for a new tree to be installed. In some cases, safety and visibility requirements restrict trees in certain locations.*

**Q: How will I know if there are buried utility lines in the parkway?**

**A:** *In most cases, any buried lines are well below the depth that the tree is planted. However, homeowners can dial 811 or visit [www.texas811.org](http://www.texas811.org) for a free utility locating service. Their representatives can come out and mark where any gas or electric lines are buried. Please note that 811 does not mark for water or sprinkler lines.*

## How to Plant a Tree

### Dig a hole

- Make your hole at least twice as wide as the rootball, but no deeper. A little shallow is better than too deep. Proper depth is critical to a healthy tree.
- Roughen-up the sides of the hole. Clay soils “glaze” easily; take a few minutes and chop up any smooth walls in the hole to help the roots get established.

### Remove the container

- Lay the tree over and gently hit the sides of the container to loosen the rootball.
- Slip the rootball from the container or roll the container away from the rootball.
- Try to avoid yanking the tree out of the pot or using the trunk as a carrying handle.

### Loosen the roots

- Roughen-up the sides of the rootball and trim or spread out any circling roots you may find, especially at the bottom of the rootball.
- The rootball should be “shaggy”, but you don’t need to try and pull out every root.

### Place the tree

- Pick the tree up by the rootball (not the trunk) and place it in the hole. If the rootball is too heavy, try rolling it into the hole.
- Check your depth and add soil under the roots as needed to bring the top of the rootball level with or slightly higher (1”-2”) than the surrounding soil.
- Make sure the overall shape of the tree is upright and rotate the tree as needed.

### Backfill

- Use the same soil that you removed from the hole. Adding amendments (compost, sand, etc) will discourage the roots from spreading into the surrounding soil.
- Tamp or firm the soil as you go. The goal is to eliminate air pockets, but not compact the soil. It should be firm, not hard.
- Watering as you backfill can help eliminate large air pockets and firm up the soil while ensuring the roots are well watered.
- A small amount of soil should be left after backfilling. Use this to create a soil ring or “moat” around the outer edge of the tree’s rootball. This will help hold moisture around the root system while the tree is getting established. Resist the urge to spread the soil over the top of the rootball or around the trunk of the tree.

### Water

- Thoroughly soak the roots and surrounding soil. Water slowly and deeply to ensure even moisture. A proper soil ring will hold the water where it needs to be.
- Firm up any areas that may appear to be “boiling” (large bubbles at the surface).

### Mulch

- Add a 2”-4” thick layer of mulch to the top of the soil, including your soil ring. Keep the mulch off of the trunk and in an even layer (no mulch volcanoes). Water now if you have not already done so (it also helps hold the mulch in place).

### Pruning

- Remove any dead or damaged limbs or co-dominant leaders.
- Cut limbs back to the next largest branch (avoid stub cuts).
- Avoid pruning lower limbs for the first few years. They help your tree to thicken up.

### Staking

- Stake loosely on 2-3 sides and only if necessary. A tree will be stronger without it.
- If staked, remove within a year to prevent damage to the trunk of the tree.

### Maintenance

- Water once a week for the first couple of years (until established), applying about 7 gallons per caliper inch (most 5-gallon trees will take 4-5 gallons of water per week).
- Remember to water slowly and deeply. A deep, vast root system is the goal.
- Maintain a 2”-4” layer of mulch and keep it off the trunk.
- Keep weed-eaters and mowers away from the trunk. Don’t let your hard work go to waste.

## Guidelines for Landscaping in Parkway (City Code & Guidelines)

### Public Open Space Easement (P.O.S.E.)

A 20-foot by 20-foot triangular public open space easement is required on corner lots at the intersection of two streets. A 15-foot by 15-foot triangular public open space of easement is required on corner lots at the intersection of an alley and a street. In addition, at the intersection of a driveway or turnout section and a dedicated alley, a 10-foot by 10-foot triangular open space easement is to be provided on each side at the driveway or turnout at the time the driveway and/or alley is constructed.

No structure, object, or plant of any type may obstruct vision from a height of 24-inches to a height of 11 feet above the top of the curb, including, but not limited to buildings, fences, walks, signs, trees, shrubs, cars, trucks, etc., in the public open space easement as shown on the illustration.

### Landscaping in Parkway

- A medium or large tree shall be planted a minimum of 2 feet from the face of the curb, sidewalk, or other structure.
- A small tree or shrub shall be planted a minimum of 1.5 feet from the face of the curb, sidewalk, or other structure.
- A minimum planting area of 3 feet must be available between back of curb and sidewalk to plant any small tree or large shrub and a minimum of 4 feet to plant large trees. A large tree shall be defined as a species that reach a height of 50 feet at maturity.
- In residential areas a minimum spacing of twenty-five feet is recommended between shade trees planted on parkways and is required in commercial districts or major arterial streets.
- All landscaping shall be located so that pedestrians can walk parallel to the street within the parkway whether a paved sidewalk is or is not provided.
- No tree or shrub shall obstruct the view of any traffic signal, sign, or other public sign.
- Trees planted under power lines will be a species that reaches a height of 30' or less upon maturity.
- Any tree or shrub planted in the parkway is the property of the City and the City reserves the right to prune or remove such tree or shrub if it becomes a traffic hazard or poses risk.

Planting trees or shrubs on any public property requires a permit from Parks and Community Services and can be obtained by calling the City Forester at 817-392-5738.

The following trees are prohibited on city parkways: hackberry (*Celtis sp.*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), mulberry (*Morus sp.*), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), Arizona ash (*Fraxinus velutina*), cottonwood (*Populus deltoids*), willow (*Salix sp.*), Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) or any species of tree, shrub vine or grasses listed in the Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests published by United State Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

