



NYC Parks

## Why Plant Trees?



Trees provide a vast array of social, economic and environmental benefits for all New Yorkers.

- **Improved Air Quality**-Net annual air pollutants removed, released, and avoided average 1.73 lbs per tree and are valued at \$5.27 million or \$9.02 per tree. In fact, one tree can remove 26 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually, the equivalent of 11,000 miles of car emissions. In addition, trees remove dust and other pollutants from the air.
- **Improved Health**- There is strong evidence that trees help reduce air pollutants that can trigger asthma and other respiratory illnesses. A 2008 study in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* found that children in NY living in areas with more street trees have a lower prevalence of asthma. Studies find that by planting trees, there is a high likelihood of lowering childhood asthma rates in the area served by Community Board 3. Green spaces also encourage physical activity-a healthy habit for any New Yorker.
- **Community and Business District Appeal**- The greening of business districts increases community pride and positive perception of an area, drawing customers to the businesses. Studies have found that tree-lined retail districts encourage more frequent visits, more time spent shopping and more spending by consumers.
- **Reduced Crime**- A study by University of California horticulturalist Ted Stamen in 1993 found that urban spaces which had been planted had a 90% chance of remaining graffiti free.
- **Storm Water Capture**- New York City's street trees capture rain both in their canopies and tree beds, reducing storm water runoff by 890.6 million gallons annually. This has an estimated value of \$35.6 million and the average tree captures 1,432 gallons of storm water each year.
- **Slowing Global Climate Change**- Urban trees help offset climate change by capturing atmospheric carbon dioxide in their tissue, reducing energy used by buildings, and reducing carbon dioxide emissions from fossil-fuel based power plants. NYC trees remove over 42,000 tons of carbon each year.
- **Lower Summer Air Temperature**- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, urban forests reduce urban temperatures significantly by shading buildings and concrete and returning humidity to the air through evaporative cooling.
- **Natural Resource Conservation**- By using trees to modify temperatures, the amount of fossil fuels used for cooling and heating by homeowners and businesses is reduced.
- **High Return of Investment**- Over the years the City has invested millions in its urban forest. NYC Park Department estimates that trees provide \$5.60 in benefits for every dollar spent on tree planting and care.



# Tree Planting Process

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## Step 1: Survey

NYC Parks foresters survey every potential planting location to determine if it can accommodate the healthy growth of new trees. NYC Parks surveys sites on blocks with few or no trees, where trees have been removed and upon request from New Yorkers across the five boroughs. When a location and appropriate tree species is selected based on the site conditions, a white dot is painted on the curb.



## Step 2: Utilities

The utility companies mark the underground gas (yellow), electric (red), and telecommunication (orange) lines at the proposed planting location to ensure that the tree planting will not conflict with any of these utilities. Though a site may have been approved during the survey process, it may later be declined after the utilities are marked on the sidewalk and street.



## Step 3: Marking

An NYC Parks forester and the planting contractor will then visit the planting site to mark out the future tree bed and tree location. A white "T" is painted on the curb where the tree will be planted. You may also see white marks on the sidewalk to indicate the corners of the future street tree bed. Marking of the planting location will most likely take place between February and March for spring plantings, and between September and October for fall plantings. NYC Parks is also using a specialized flag and decal to indicate where tree planting is taking place.



## Step 4: Site preparation

NYC Parks' planting contractors often prepare the sidewalk before the tree is planted. You may see saw cuts in the sidewalk along the edges of the tree bed, or the concrete may even be removed entirely, leaving an open tree planting area. Preparing the site ahead of time makes it easier to plant the tree at a later date and allows the contractor to plant more trees during the short planting seasons. Don't worry if you see sidewalk preparation and the tree was not planted. **THE CONTRACTOR WILL BE BACK TO PLANT THE TREE**, most likely within a few weeks depending on the weather. If inclement weather prevents contractors from fulfilling their planting obligations by the end of the season, the tree bed will be addressed the following season.



## Step 5: Tree Planting

The new tree will arrive between March and June for the spring season and between November and January for the fall season. Each tree will have two wooden stakes on either side for support and the area around the tree will be covered in mulch to minimize weed growth and retain water.



## Step 6: Guarantee and Maintenance

All street trees are under guarantee for two years after they are planted. During this time, the planting contractor is responsible for regular maintenance of the tree, including weed removal, replacing missing soil or mulch and minor pruning. The contractor is also required to water the tree at least once every two weeks from May through October. If a tree dies during the guarantee period it will be replaced in the next planting season. New Yorkers are strongly encouraged to help water street trees weekly during the warmer seasons, 20 gallons or more, for the first 3-5 years after planting.

New Yorkers are strongly encouraged to perform basic tree care to promote the healthy growth of the tree. Visit <http://www.nycgovparks.org/reg/stewardship> to get involved.



## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **When is the tree going to be planted?**

NYC Parks plants trees in two planting seasons. The fall planting season runs from November through January and the spring planting season runs from March through June. Tree planting may be delayed by weather or other unforeseen events, therefore we are unable to provide an exact planting date.

### **What if I do not want a tree?**

Since the area between the curb and the property line belongs to the City, we are creating a ribbon of green along this public space. The location within the sidewalk of trees and other city assets--such as street signs, bus stops, traffic lights, fire hydrants--is not optional or determined by adjacent property owners. Trees are just another municipal asset, although they grow more valuable over time instead of depreciating.

We strongly encourage contacting the NYC Parks Forester managing tree planting in your constituency by email (see: "Contact Sheet") to discuss any questions or concerns. Our foresters are committed to working with constituents on tree placement and species selection.

### **May I choose the type of tree to be planted?**

Constituents can certainly indicate a preferred tree species and our foresters will make the final species selection with this preference in mind. Our foresters carefully survey and select the most appropriate tree species and quantities for each planting site. They consider factors such as available sidewalk space, proximity to utilities and existing trees on the block before selecting a species. NYC Parks plants over 120 different types of trees which are handpicked by our foresters to be planted on NYC's sidewalks.

### **Will the tree damage my utilities?**

While we know the value of trees, we also acknowledge that planting in NYC has its challenges. This process accounts for existing street conditions and potential conflicts that could interfere with the healthy growth of a tree. Gas, electric and telecommunications lines are marked prior to planting and the tree will be placed a safe distance from all underground utilities.

### **Will the tree damage my sewer?**

Tree roots will not damage water pipes unless the entry of the roots has been afforded by a defect, such as a crack or leak, in the pipe itself. As a precautionary measure, Parks has also enlarged the standard tree pit size to allow room for water infiltration and root growth so as to mitigate any possible conflicts with neighboring infrastructure.

### **Will the tree damage my sidewalk?**

Our planting contractor will be responsible for the repair of any inadvertent damages they cause to the sidewalk/curb, but pre-existing damages will not be fixed. If an empty tree bed in front of your property contains flowers, planters, cobblestones, or other materials that you want to keep, please remove them in advance of the planting season. The contractor will attempt to remove and reset existing tree guards if possible.

As the tree matures, it will be eligible for the Trees and Sidewalks program, which repairs New York City sidewalks that are damaged by curbside trees in a way that preserves the health of the tree's roots and minimizes further buckling, at no cost to the taxpayer. As a precautionary measure, Parks has also enlarged the standard tree pit size to allow room for water infiltration and root growth so as to mitigate any possible conflicts with neighboring infrastructure.

### **Who will take care of the tree?**

Our planting contractor is responsible for all basic maintenance including watering, weeding and replacement, if necessary, for two years. As they mature, the trees will be eligible for a variety of other forestry services from the City, just call 311. If you are interested in learning to care for your new street tree please visit

<http://www.nycgovparks.org/reg/stewardship> to learn more.





## Frequently Asked Questions cont'd

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### **Do I have to clean dog waste, remove litter or rake leaves?**

Dog owners are required to clean up after their dogs under New York City's Canine Waste Law, however, adjacent property owners responsible for regular maintenance and cleaning of the sidewalk abutting their property. You may report frequent incidents of dog waste by calling 311 or by visiting [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov). Similarly, if your block is the site of chronic littering, you may request a public trash bin by calling 311 or by visiting [www.nyc.gov/dsny](http://www.nyc.gov/dsny). We encourage residents to maintain their properties by raking leaves, but presently the Department of Sanitation does not issue tickets for uncollected leaves.

If you are concerned about dog waste and litter, you may be interested in installing a tree guard. Tree guards are fence-like structures placed around tree beds to protect trees from car doors, soil compaction and pets, and make a beautiful addition to your block. Please see below or visit <http://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/tree-care/tree-guards> for more information about how to obtain a tree guard.

### **How can I get a tree guard?**

The New York Tree Trust, a program of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and the City Parks Foundation, was established in 1994 to protect, preserve, and enhance New York City's street, park and forest trees. The New York Tree Trust offers a range of services such as tree guard installation, stump removal and memorial tree planting. For a tax deductible donation, the NY Tree Trust will install a custom made iron tree guard around the tree.

To find out more information about the Tree Trust or to make a donation, please call 718-760-4009 or email [nytreetrust@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:nytreetrust@parks.nyc.gov).



## Tree Stewardship Program

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Our street tree stewardship program was initiated in spring 2009 with the goal of providing free resources toward street and forest tree care and supporting, organizing and tracking local groups who can commit to adopting street trees on a long term basis. Since then, the program has engaged over 15,000 stewards, inspiring a broad cross-section of New Yorkers to care about trees in order to ensure the survival of our growing urban forest. The program offers hands-on workshops appropriate to various skill-levels, tracks volunteer engagement and trees stewarded, hosts networking and skill-sharing events, and provides incentives and recognition. Through these strategies we are building coalitions of volunteers in all five boroughs who are committing to nurturing young trees.



All of our programs are designed to meet the needs of the individual: we aim to engage people, educate them in the essential steps of urban tree stewardship, and finally empower them with the necessary resources to continue caring for trees independently. We are committed to meeting people where they are, and providing the right education opportunities and tools necessary to move them to a higher level of engagement. To that end we established the Care Captain program to certify tree stewards to provide their own workshops to community members and instruct them in advanced care and community organizing techniques as well as the TreeLC Truck, a traveling toolkit of supplies and technical support that expanded the operational capacity of trained Care Captains. Between 2012 and 2014 we awarded \$23,595 in mini-grants to community groups dedicated to young street tree stewardship.

### **Attend a tree care workshop and learn more about:**

- How to identify trees in NYC
- Benefits trees bring to our city
- Tree Care – Water! Weed! Mulch!
- Adopt-a-Tree website
- Free stewardship tools

To register for NYC Parks stewardship programs, visit <http://www.nycgovparks.org/reg/stewardship>

If you have any questions or would like to set up your own workshop, please email [stewardship@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:stewardship@parks.nyc.gov).