



STREET TREES

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the City Arborist encourage community-initiated tree plantings. Business districts located on arterials have an advantage over residential areas when it comes to street trees: if the business district is willing to pay for the trees, SDOT helps coordinate the planting on arterials and in most cases will also maintain the newly installed street trees.

Before you purchase trees for planting in your business district, go through the following checklist:

1. Plan ahead for trees to be planted in early spring or late fall. Fall is preferable, as it gives the trees a better chance to establish.
2. Check the proposed site - trees can only be planted where there is a curbed roadway.
3. Call the City Arborist at 206-684-7649. The arborist will assist you with the coordination of your project, including the selection of tree species and size. For example, the arborist will take business signs, awnings and sidewalk widths into consideration when choosing the tree type and location.
4. Measure the space available for the trees. Small-scale trees will be planted 15 to 25 feet apart, medium trees 25 to 35 feet apart. Trees will be spaced a minimum of 30 feet from a street intersection and 10 feet from utility or power poles, 10 feet from driveways, 20 feet from street lights and 5 feet from underground utility connections. The City Arborist will work with you to choose the best location and to minimize conflicts with storefront windows and signs.
5. Note that standard tree pit size is 4 X 6 feet or 5 X 5 feet depending on sidewalk block size and width.

6. Call 1-800-424-5555 to arrange for utilities to be located. All underground utilities must be verified before any planting occurs.

Frequently asked questions:

What kind of tree is best?

The City Arborist, 206-684-7649, can best answer this question. Before you call, have answers to the following questions: 1) Are there utility lines overhead? 2) How wide is the planting area? 3) Will concrete need to be removed to provide planting sites? 4) What will be the surface treatment under the new trees? Having this information will help a great deal in determining the right tree species for your area.

Who is responsible for maintaining street trees?

Currently the City of Seattle (Seattle Department of Transportation) maintains about 25% of the planted trees in the city. Only trees that have been planted by the City of Seattle are maintained by the City. Many of the street trees are the maintenance responsibility of the property owner — even if they are planted in the public right-of-way. While the City does not maintain all street trees, it does regulate all of them. Permits are needed to plant, prune or remove privately maintained street trees. If you have trees that are maintained by the City that you believe need pruning, please call the City Arborist, 206-684-7649. SDOT will inspect the trees and schedule them for maintenance.

What are the most commonly planted trees in Seattle ?

The most common trees are Flowering Cherry, Hawthorne, Norway Maple and Red Maple. The City Arborist often changes the list of recommended tree species based on the types of trees planted in the past and current biological conditions such as emerging pests and diseases. It is a good idea to consult with the City Arborist before choosing a tree species.

How much do trees cost?

Although prices may vary widely depending upon tree species, a two-inch caliper tree can cost approximately \$130 to \$200. This is a wholesale price and does not include installation or other related costs. Buying a tree guaranteed by the nursery generally doubles the cost and having the tree installed could potentially triple the cost.

Who can help our group plan and organize a community planting or purchase of street trees?

The Department of Neighborhoods offers a Tree Fund as part of their



Neighborhood Matching Funds Program. The City provides the trees and neighbors share the work of planting and caring for the trees. Groups of neighbors that represent a minimum of 5 households on the block can receive trees for planting strips on residential streets. Before deliveries are made, participants must attend a training session provided by the City. Trees are delivered in the fall to a requested spot near the planting site. To match the City's contribution of free trees, neighbors must organize the planting effort, provide necessary tools and be responsible for watering and maintaining their trees. This contribution from neighbors helps meet the community building objectives of the Tree Fund.

Are grates necessary at the base of trees?

Grates **may** be required if the planting strip width is less than 5 feet in order to provide pedestrians with adequate walking space. Otherwise, they are not recommended. When using a grate, you must follow the Seattle Department of Transportation's specifications.

Benefits and challenges of street trees:

BENEFITS

Can increase property values – especially full-grown healthy trees. Recent research shows that people like to shop in business districts with trees. [For more information about this research.](#) Helps mitigate air pollution, slows storm water runoff and saves energy by shading buildings in summer and letting in light in the winter. Are psychologically and aesthetically pleasing.

CHALLENGES

Can damage sidewalks and block business signs and storefront windows if poorly chosen or poorly placed. Maintenance and repair of damaged infrastructure is the responsibility of the property owner, unless the City of Seattle installs the tree. Will require a "lifetime" of maintenance.

Contacts

CITY OF SEATTLE

<http://www.seattle.gov>

Seattle Department of Transportation

City Arborist -----
206-684-7649
Website: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/arborist.htm>

City of Seattle's Urban Forest Information Line ----- 206-
684-5042

Department of Neighborhoods ----- 206-
684-0464
Tree Fund website:
<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/treefund.htm>

**NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS
CONTACTS**

University District Business Improvement Area
Teresa Lord Hugel----- 206-
547-4417
Website: <http://www.udistrictchamber.org>

Wallingford Chamber of Commerce
Janet Stillman----- 206-
632-3165
Email: chamber@wallingford.org
Website: <http://chamber.iactivesite.com>