



Planning and Zoning Department
500 Quartermaster court
Jeffersonville, In 47130

Tree Care Recommendations (for young trees)

Young trees are especially vulnerable for the first 2-3 years after planting. Proper care during this time is critical for the health and longevity of the tree. Follow these tips for the first three years to establish a strong root system and grow a healthy tree.

Water

It's important that your tree is regularly watered after planting. Unless it has rained heavily, your tree should be watered once a week during the spring, summer and early fall months for the first two-three years. Here are some recommended ways you can do this:

- **Treegrator bag** – This is a watering bag that you can purchase at your local garden center, it is placed around the trunk of the tree and filled with water once a week.
- **5 gallon bucket method** – drill six to eight 3/8" diameter holes in the bottom of a 5 gallon bucket. Place bucket at base of tree. Fill bucket with water and let the water slowly drain out. Do this once a week. Consider putting a rock or brick in the bucket to keep it from blowing away when empty and please remove the bucket as soon as possible when it is empty.
- **Garden hose** – Leave the hose at the base of the tree. Turn the hose on to a slight trickle and run for 20-25 minutes. Do this once a week.



Because each site is different and weather conditions vary, it is important to check your soil moisture between watering. Before watering, dig your finger into the soil 3-4 inches. If the soil is wet or almost muddy, you do not need to provide any more water. Over watering can just as easily kill a tree as under-watering.

Weeding

Weed eaters and Lawn Mowers are a common cause of tree death. The weed eater can easily cut through the thin bark of young trees damaging their ability to transport nutrients; too many cuts through the bark of your tree the trunk and it will die. Too many bumps and scratches by a lawn mower can do the same.

Eliminate the need for weed-eaters and lawn mowers around the base of your tree by hand weeding and proper mulching (see next page) for the first three years. If you have a professional lawn service (who may not be as careful around your tree as you would be), a tree guard can be made by cutting a 6-inch long segment of a four-inch diameter plastic drain pipe, cutting open one side and carefully wrapping it around the tree so as not to damage the bark. You will need to remove the tree guard once the trunk begins to fill out the tree guard or it can choke the tree causing irreparable damage or death of the tree.

Mulch

Mulching around the base of the tree helps conserve moisture in the soil and keeps weed and grass growth around the base of the tree to a minimum. Mulch will break down over time and will need to be replenished to maintain a depth of 2-4 inches. Mulch wide but not deep and **never** pile mulch against the trunk “like a volcano.” Moisture and micro-organisms in the mulch can destroy the thin bark of your new tree.

A handy rule of thumb for mulch is: 3 feet in diameter, 3” deep and 3” away from the trunk.

Staking

While it’s often done, young trees do not generally need to be staked. Too often, staking materials serve no necessary function and are left on too long, resulting in a girdled (strangled) trunk and a dead tree. Also, many people tie stakes to trees too tightly, so the trees do not sway in the breeze. This prevents them from developing the strength to adapt to strong winds.

So, unless your newly planted tree is having issues standing up straight on its own, it’s not advised to provide any stakes.

Pruning

Your young tree should not need pruning in the first two-three years. In fact is best not to prune the tree until it is well established. There are two exceptions:

1. Prune off any shoots that may form at the base of the tree. These can divert energy away from the tree and should be cut off as close to the ground as possible.
2. You may also remove any dead or broken branches.

Fertilizers and Chemicals

Most soils in Jeffersonville contain adequate nutrients to support tree growth, and additional fertilizer could be harmful to your tree. The best thing you can give your tree is your love and attention.

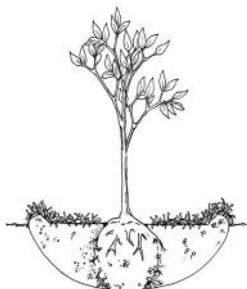
A Note on Tree Growth

Some people get worried when they don’t see tree growth right away. Trees need some time to establish before they start growing and you might not see significant growth until the third year after a tree is planted. A simplified explanation of new tree growth is “Sleep, Creep, Leap.”

In the first year after planting, the tree isn’t likely to grow at all, it’s working on getting its roots settled into the soil and just staying alive in its new location – it is essentially resting or “sleeping”

In the second year, you’ll likely see a tiny bit of growth, this is when the tree starts “creeping”

It is only in the third or fourth year, once the tree is established, that it begins growing visibly, essentially “leaping” into the sky.



**We hope that you enjoy your new tree.
We look forward to it growing tall and shading our streets, yards,
and sidewalks.**

**Best regards,
City of Jeffersonville Planning Department,**