

## Water

Do...

- ❑ Check soil moisture once a week *before* watering.
- ❑ Water if the soil is dry to a depth of 4-5 inches. Slowly pour 10 gallons of water directly on the root ball, or place a garden hose at the tree's base and let the water run at a trickle for 10 minutes. Loosen the soil around the root ball if the water does not soak in.
- ❑ Water in the early morning or evening when temperatures are cool and less water will evaporate.

*Why? Urban trees need extra water to survive, especially newly planted ones that have had most of their root system removed for transplanting.*

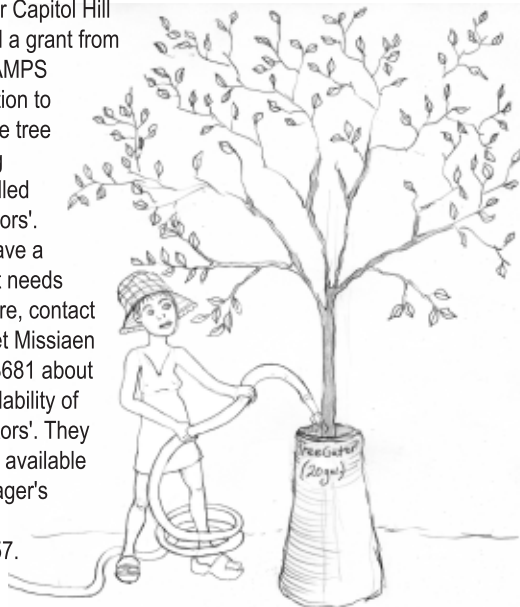
*Trees in urban situations often do not get enough water because compacted soils and large expanses of paved surfaces prevent water from soaking in. Droughts compound this problem.*

Don't...

- ⊗ Water if the soil is damp.
- ⊗ Overwater

*Why? Root rot caused by continuously wet soil will kill the tree.*

Trees for Capitol Hill received a grant from the CHAMPS Foundation to purchase tree watering bags called 'Tregators'. If you have a tree that needs extra care, contact Margaret Missiaen at 546-8681 about the availability of 'Tregators'. They are also available from Frager's for \$25, 543-6157.



## Some Tree Information

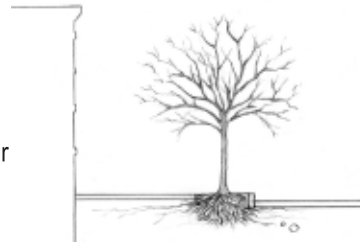
Theoretically, trees should be able to take care of themselves. However, removed from their natural forest setting of ample soil, light, and moisture, urban trees require a little help from their human partners in order to provide the benefits to air, water, and aesthetic quality we expect from them. Trees produce oxygen, filter carbon, and prevent erosion by collecting and holding water on their leaf surfaces while their roots hold soil in place.

Of particular importance is the condition of the tree root zone. Urban tree roots are confined by pavement, utilities, walls, compacted soil, and other impediments to their growth.

Increasing the amount and improving the quality of the soil that is available to trees greatly enhances their ability to survive, and even thrive, despite their largely confined environment.



*Tree roots in an unconfined setting.*



*Tree roots in an urban context.*

For more information please contact:  
SPNA Tree Subcommittee - Steve & Anya Sattler  
(Art Garden Design - [artgarden@starpower.net](mailto:artgarden@starpower.net) / 202.546.6920)

SPNA Environment Committee - Laura Canfield  
([lmc01@bellatlantic.net](mailto:lmc01@bellatlantic.net) / 202.547.4759)

Trees For Capitol Hill - Margaret Missiaen  
([missiaen@starpower.net](mailto:missiaen@starpower.net))

Additional Urban Tree Resources:  
D.C. Dept. of Public Works (202.727.1000)  
Casey Tree Foundation ([www.caseytrees.org](http://www.caseytrees.org) / 202.833.4010)  
Mt.Pleasant's Green Streets Initiative ([www.greenstreets.org](http://www.greenstreets.org))

*Special thanks to Beth Sworobuk for populating the drawings with her wonderful characters!*

© Copyright 2002 Art Garden Design - reproduced by permission

# BE GOOD TO OUR STREET TREES

New trees have been planted in our neighborhood partly as a result of the Neighborhood Street Tree Inventory, a combined effort of SPNA, Trees for Capitol Hill, and neighborhood volunteers. To survive, let alone thrive, these trees require care that the City cannot provide at this time.



We are asking everyone to help provide extra care for these newly planted trees. The following information is provided as a guide to understanding how to help our new trees along and protect and care for our established street trees too.

**PLEASE HELP!**



Published by the Environment Committee of  
**Stanton Park Neighborhood Association**  
P.O. Box 15043, Southeast Station, Washington, D.C. 20003

## Mulch

Do....

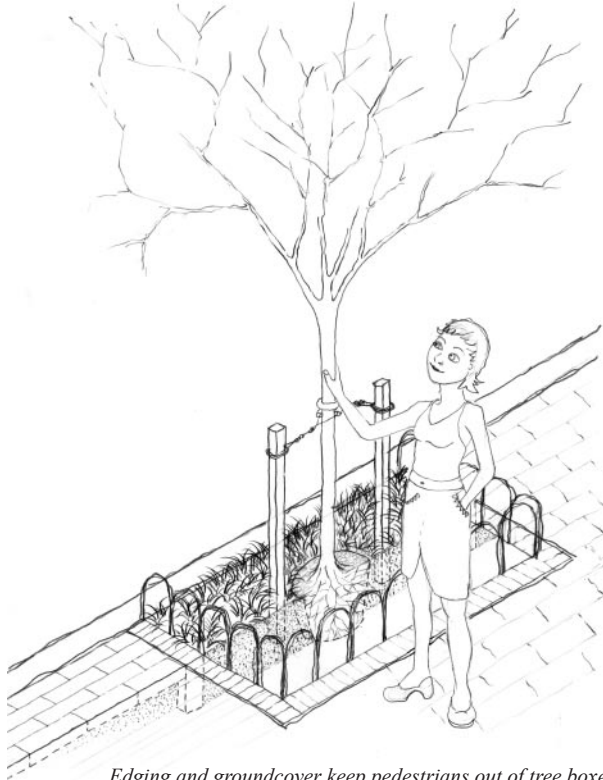
- ❑ Mulch trees to a depth of 2" max. with shredded hardwood bark mulch.
- ❑ Gently pull mulch away from the base of the tree where the trunk begins to flare out.
- ❑ Check for strings, wire, or anything wrapped around the trunk of the tree.

*Why? Mulch keeps moisture in the soil and keeps roots cool. It also keeps weeds from growing. Items wrapped around the trunk of a tree can strangle the tree as it grows, preventing the flow of nutrients and water gathered by the roots from reaching the rest of the tree.*

Don't...

- ⊗ Allow mulch to touch the tree bark or base of the tree.

*Why? The cells that make up the bark and trunk of a tree are different from those that make up the roots. The moisture held by mulch can rot the bark at the base of the tree, preventing the flow of nutrients and water gathered by the roots from reaching the rest of the tree.*



Edging and groundcover keep pedestrians out of tree boxes.



Move mulch away from the base of the tree.

## Stakes and Wires

Do...

- ❑ Remove stakes and wires after one year.

*Why? Recent research shows that a tree responds to the swaying of its trunk and crown by increasing the girth at the base of its trunk as a way of strengthening its support system. Removing stakes and wires after one year allows this process to occur.*

*Staking trees does have some benefits. It prevents a newly planted tree from tipping over in a high wind and allows the roots to reach out into the new soil without being disturbed. But the greatest benefit may come from keeping people from trampling tree roots or snapping off limbs before they are established.*

Don't...

- ⊗ Leave stakes and wires on too long.

*Why? If staked too long, a tree's trunk could snap off more easily once the stakes are removed. Also, as the girth of the trunk increases wires may cut into the tree, preventing the flow of food and water through the outer layers of the trunk.*

## Pruning

If you think a young tree needs pruning, please contact Margaret Missiaen of Trees for Capitol Hill by phone or e-mail (202.546.8681, missiaen@starpower.net). Pruning of older trees should be handled by the D.C. Dept. of Public Works (202.727.1000).

## Fertilizing

Trees do not need fertilizer.

## Tree Boxes

Do...

- ❑ Plant groundcover or perennials in tree pits of newly planted trees (but NOT directly into the root ball).
- ❑ Install tree pit fencing.

*Why? Groundcover and fencing help to keep foot traffic out of tree boxes. Pedestrian traffic compacts the soil, lowering its porosity (amount of air space within the soil) thereby preventing water from soaking in and lowering the amount of oxygen available to roots.*

Don't....

- ⊗ Install raised tree boxes (i.e. timbers which raise the level of soil around a tree).
- ⊗ Plant annuals or groundcover in tree pits with established trees.

*Why? Covering the roots of existing trees prevents oxygen from reaching the roots and trunk, causing them to rot. Disturbance and removal of the roots caused by digging for planting can cause serious damage to the tree.*

## Posting Signs

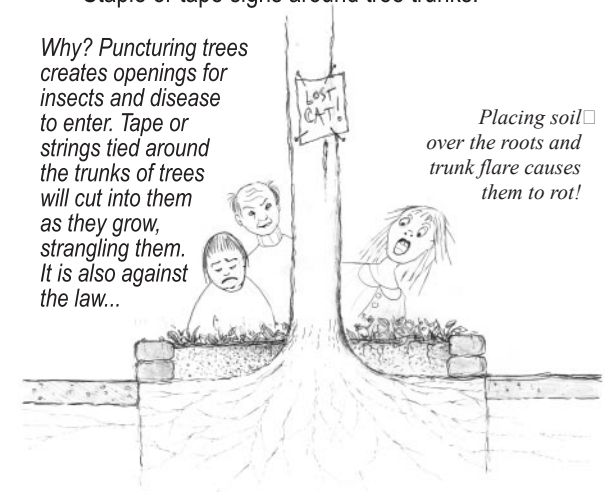
Do...

- ❑ Use utility poles, street lamps or other vertical non-living elements to post your signs.

Don't...

- ⊗ Staple or tape signs around tree trunks.

*Why? Puncturing trees creates openings for insects and disease to enter. Tape or strings tied around the trunks of trees will cut into them as they grow, strangling them. It is also against the law...*



Placing soil over the roots and trunk flare causes them to rot!