

## BENEFITS FROM TREES

Trees improve the environment around our homes.

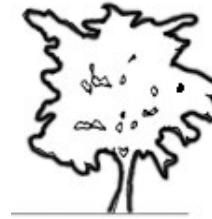
1. Trees convert sunlight into chemical energy, removing carbon dioxide from the air (a greenhouse gas contributing to climate change) and releasing oxygen that we need to breathe.
2. Trees are natural air conditioners, cooling the air as excess water vapor evaporates from their leaves (transpiration) and shading us on hot, sunny days.
3. Trees are excellent sound absorbers, reducing the sound as well as the sight of traffic along our busy streets.
4. Trees reduce the energy used for heating and cooling our homes.
  - **Evergreen trees** on the northeast side of a house buffer cold winter winds.
  - **Deciduous trees** on the south and west sides of a house provide shade in summer, but let in sunlight in winter.
5. Tree roots help prevent erosion in heavy rains, especially on slopes.
6. Trees, both alive and dead, provide refuge and habitat for birds and other wildlife.
7. Trees are pleasant to be near. The sound of a breeze through their leaves is soothing to us.

## NEEDHAM'S TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

To encourage the planting of trees, the Town of Needham may add or replace a street tree in front of your home.

1. The Town will determine if there is sufficient space for a tree (see [www.needhamma.gov](http://www.needhamma.gov), Departments, Public Works, Parks and Forestry).
2. You may request that a tree be planted in your front yard instead of in the berm to avoid harm to the tree from reduced space and water for roots, collisions with vehicles, widening of roads, pruning for wires, and snowplowing and salting.
3. The Town will plant a tree from the Town nursery, mixing the existing soil with some compost from the RTS.
4. Possible trees available for selection:
  - **Shade trees** - native maples, London plane tree, thornless honeylocust, Japanese Zelkova, and Ginkgo.
  - **Smaller flowering trees** - crabapple, tree lilac, Kousa dogwood, pear, plum, and serviceberry.
5. A tree planted on private property will be cared for by the Town for one year after which it becomes the homeowner's responsibility. The first 2 to 3 years are critical (see p. 4).

To contact the Town about evaluating your space and obtaining a tree, call Needham's Department of Public Works; Parks, Grounds, and Forestry Division at 781-455-7534.



## CARING FOR A NEW TREE

The homeowner's responsibility is to give good care to the tree after it is planted.

1. For the first 2 to 3 weeks, every few days depending on rainfall, water the tree slowly and deeply so that water penetrates about 12 inches.
2. During the next 2 to 3 years, water deeply during dry periods (i.e. less than one inch of rainfall during a week).
3. Plant groundcover plants or add mulch around the tree to protect the young bark, especially from lawnmowers and weed trimmers. Bark contains living cells necessary for the tree's nourishment.
4. Adding **mulch** prevents weed growth,, helps keep the soil cool and moist, and if compost, adds nutrients.
  - **Use no more than 2 to 3 inches. More is not better** and can prevent the roots from getting enough air and water.
  - **Do not** let the mulch touch the trunk to prevent "girdling" roots from forming from the trunk that tend to grow horizontally, encircling and strangling the trunk.
  - Possible mulches are partially decomposed compost (homemade or from the RTS), pine needles, autumn leaves, ground-up bark, and wood chips.

## CARING FOR EXISTING TREES

**Think twice before removing a mature tree, which is irreplaceable and may add thousands of dollars to the value of your property.**

1. Plant groundcover plants or add mulch around the tree to protect bark. See CARING FOR A NEW TREE – Pg. 4, #3 & #4.
2. Prune properly to remove damaged branches or let in more sunshine. At [www.umassgreeninfo.org](http://www.umassgreeninfo.org), read about “Pruning Shade Trees” in “Plant Culture and Maintenance”.
3. Carefully read the labels of herbicides applied to lawns to kill broad-leaved weeds (e.g. dandelions, plantain). Such herbicides, improperly applied, may weaken broad-leaved trees when herbicide drifts in the wind or is absorbed by the root systems, which extend well beyond the drip line of a tree.  
  
Instead, produce a healthy lawn that can out-compete the weeds by:
  - hand weeding,
  - mowing high (about 3 inches),
  - leaving grass clippings on the lawn to enrich the soil.
4. Watch out for invasive plants that compete with trees and other desirable plants (e.g. oriental bittersweet which can climb a tree and smother it, barberry, & and burning bush). See this website: [www.newfs.org/protect/invasive-plants/massachusetts-invasive-plant-list.html](http://www.newfs.org/protect/invasive-plants/massachusetts-invasive-plant-list.html)

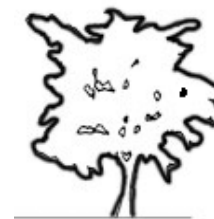
5. Watch out for pests that may do serious harm to your trees. At [www.umassgreeninfo.org](http://www.umassgreeninfo.org), read the “Hot Fact sheets” about some current pest problems and go to the appropriate “Fact Sheets” to learn more about pests.

Currently, winter moth is an introduced pest whose caterpillars are feeding on many kinds of trees in Massachusetts. The long-term solution is the introduction of its specific, natural insect predators to affected areas; that is how the gypsy moth has been controlled. Asian Longhorned Beetle, now prevalent in the Worcester area, is a new threat to maples.

6. If you decide that the pest problem is very serious, use the least toxic treatment to avoid killing beneficial insects.
7. If your tree needs professional care for pruning or spraying, hire a knowledgeable state-certified arborist.
8. Before a construction project, consult with an arborist about protecting your trees. Ask your contractor to avoid tree removal and root damage during construction. Root injury due to cutting and to soil compaction is the cause of the decline and death of many trees.
8. **To plant your own tree**, choose the right tree for your location and read the planting instructions at [www.umassgreeninfo.org](http://www.umassgreeninfo.org). Under “Fact Sheets” click on “Plant Culture and Maintenance” and then open “Planting and Maintaining Trees and Shrubs”.

**Make an investment in Needham's future – plant and nurture your trees.**

**KEEP NEEDHAM  
GREEN  
WITH TREES**



**With Needham's open space rapidly disappearing, what can each of us do to keep our town as green and livable as possible?**

- **Plant trees along our streets.**
- **Take care of the trees already growing in our yards.**

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