

TREE CARE GUIDE

FOR COMMUNITY CANOPY STEWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW TREE!

Thank you for adding to our urban tree canopy and to our neighborhood's health! Your tree and this care guide are provided by the Canopy Connectors, a volunteer environmental initiative. To learn more, go to www.unityunitarian.org/canopy-connectors-learn-more

YOUR NEW TREE IS A:

TRUNK PROTECTION

Do not:

- Use tree wrap - it can hide and increase problems beneath the wrap.

Do:

- Consider using tree guards to protect the trunk.
- Monitor plastic guards at least once per season.
- Remove guards before they start to rub against the trunk.



WATER

Trees, like people, need water to function and grow. How much water do they need? And when should they get it?

- New trees (planted in the last 3-5 years) need 5 gallons of water once a week.
- You can skip watering if it has rained more than 1 inch in a week.
- Weekly watering sounds like it could be expensive—but in reality costs only pennies.
- Skip the sprinkler. To save time and water, use a soaker hose or a device that slowly applies water like a watering bag. A cost-effective alternative is drilling 2 to 3, 1/8th inch holes into a 5-gallon bucket to set next to the tree. Fill it up with water once a week and it will do the work for you!



WHEN SHOULD I BE DOING THIS?



WINTER

- Install or replace tree guards
- Water tree 5 gallons/week if above 40 degrees with no snow cover
- Check for the 3 Ds- dead, dying, and diseased



SPRING

- Water tree 5 gallons/week
- Prune dead, dying, or diseased branches
- Install or replace tree guards
- Replenish mulch
- Remove nearby weeds



SUMMER

- Water tree 5 gallons/ week
- Check to make sure tree guard is still intact
- Replenish mulch
- Optional: fertilize in early summer during periods of high rainfall



FALL

- Water tree 5 gallons/week if above 40 degrees
- Prune dead, dying, or diseased branches
- Make sure tree guard is intact
- Rake or mow nearby leaves to prevent fungal infections.

SOIL HEALTH

Soil health and tree health have a mutually beneficial relationship - each helps the other succeed.

To check your current soil health, send a soil sample to the UMN soil testing lab (soiltest.cfans.umn.edu)

Improve soil health by:

- Reducing disturbance to the soil
- Planting ground cover
- Increasing surrounding plant diversity
- Keeping tree roots in the soil



Avoid:

- Overfertilizing
- Digging in wet soil
- Placing excess weight around the trunk

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Tree owner's manual:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5368392.pdf

University of Minnesota Extension trees and shrubs:

<https://extension.umn.edu/find-plants/trees-and-shrubs>



MULCH

Mulching will improve the health and vitality of your tree!

- Apply a layer of wood-chip mulch 2-4 inches thick to a diameter of 3-4 feet around the base of the tree .
- Avoid mounding the mulch.



PRUNE

Pruning can improve tree health, strength, and the safety of surrounding structures.



- Prune in late fall or early spring.
- Inspect the tree one year after planting and remove dead and crossing branches
- Cut close to the base of the branch but do NOT damage the branch collar (the ring of bark where the branch meets the trunk).

Not sure a branch is dead? Nick the bark. If you see green, it's still alive; if it's brown or gray, it is dead and should be removed.