

Living in the Urban Forest

Trees in the Urban Forest: They've Gotta Be Tough

Imagine the life of a tree in an urban forest. Roots that yearn to push out nearly twice the width of the branches are confined due to sidewalks and roads; soil is compacted by pedestrians and machines; pesticides diminish soil quality; nutrients and oxygen are limited; and root and trunk damage is common from mowers, cars, and people. An urban tree's life expectancy is only ten years. Given the multiple challenges it faces, it is a wonder it survives at all.

What can you do to help these urban trees survive and thrive?

- Plant new trees in spring and fall, not in stressful hot, dry summer. Shaker's Forestry Division planted more than 450 trees this spring replacing many that have died.
- Protect roots by applying mulch correctly (think "donut", not "volcano"), in as large an area under the tree as possible. This keeps machinery away from roots and the trunk, helps catch and hold water, maintains soil moisture, and keeps competing grass and weeds away.
- Water your trees. A new tree needs approximately 10-15 gallons per week, which is best applied in a deep slow soak. New trees planted by the City come with gator bags which residents are asked to fill once or twice a week.
- Consider pests. Most insects are crucial to pollination, eat harmful pests, and feed birds and small animals. However, some can destroy healthy trees. Inspect your trees for holes in the bark, beetles, and browning, dying leaves. These problems could indicate the presence of Emerald Ash Borers or Dutch Elm disease and soon, perhaps an Asian Longhorn Beetle infestation (Currently, these are found in southern Ohio). If your ash or elm appears ill, contact Forester Pat Neville at 216-491-1490 or call a certified arborist.

To learn more about Shaker's urban forest, sign up for the [TREENews](#).