



## **Tree Maintenance Guidelines (Minimum)**

To ensure success from your tree planting, the tree must be properly cared for after the initial planting. A properly maintained tree grows well, has less problems and provides many benefits to people and our environment. By following the three year maintenance guidelines, trees receive the care they need to become established. After the first three years trees should be routinely inspected for problems and watered during dry spells.

### ***Your tree should be planted according to the specifications in these planting guides...***

- ❖ American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- ❖ Tree City USA Bulletin No. 19 – How to Select and Plant a Tree (National Arbor Day Foundation)
- ❖ Tree Planting Guide – IC 4108 (Michigan Department of Natural Resources)

### ***The year after the tree is planted these specifications should be followed...***

- \* Water. Check soil moisture a few inches below the surface in the rootball.
- \* Mulch. Layer 4 inches above the ground around the tree (but not touching the tree trunk). Mulch two times the diameter of the rootball in each direction from the tree trunk. Do not use treated or dyed mulch.
- \* Prune only if necessary. Follow specifications in the How to Prune Trees Bulletin (NA-FR-01-95) and/or Tree City USA Bulletin No. 1 – How to Prune Young Shade Trees.
- \* Stake only if necessary. Follow the specifications on the Tree Planting Guide (IC 4108).
- \* Check for mower/weed whip damage, vandal damage and animal damage. Consult arborist on how to treat wound.
- \* Check for any insect or disease problems on the tree and surrounding trees. Contact arborist if a problem exists.
- \* Do not fertilize. Fertilizer applied to newly transplanted trees can excessively dry roots (burning).
- \* Remove all tags and twine from the tree's branches and trunk to prevent girdling.

### ***The second year after the tree is planted...***

- \* Water. Trees should be checked and watered. Monitor and water trees from spring through the fall.
- \* Mulch. The area surrounding the tree must be re-mulched every spring to achieve the 4 inches depth.
- \* Remove any stakes and ties.
- \* Prune only if necessary. Follow specifications in the How to Prune Trees Bulletin (NA-FR-01-95).
- \* Check for any insect or disease problems on the new trees and surrounding trees. Contact arborist if a problem exists.

### ***The third year after the tree is planted...***

- \* Water. Root systems are still being established and soil moisture needs to be checked on a regular basis from early spring to fall.
- \* Re-mulch trees in the spring.
- \* Prune if necessary. Remember to prune before the growing season starts and follow specifications.
- \* Check for any type of damage and make corrections.
- \* Trees may be fertilized in the spring if a need exists. Consult an arborist before fertilizing.

Research has shown that it takes approximately three years for a transplanted tree to become well established on a new site. Maintaining a vigorous, healthy tree requires commitment well after the initial planting. The tree should have a healthy living environment and a structurally good form. Good form is obtained from quality planting stock, and importantly, from proper pruning. Your tree should be mulched, watered, free of insect and disease problems and should be protected from animal damage and lawn care equipment injury.



## Tree Maintenance Checklist

### April/May

- ✓ Plant trees.
- ✓ Mulch
- ✓ Stake if needed.
- ✓ Prune only if necessary to remove dead/damaged branches.
- ✓ Check for insect and disease problems.
- ✓ Remove tags and twine from branches and trunk.
- ✓ Water every week if there is less than an inch of rain.

### June

- ✓ Inspect trees for insects and disease.
- ✓ Inspect trees for signs of mechanical and animal damage. Use shelters if needed.
- ✓ Control weeds.
- ✓ Water every week if there is less than an inch of rain.

### July

- ✓ Inspect trees for insects and disease.
- ✓ Inspect trees for signs of mechanical and animal damage. Use shelters if needed.
- ✓ Control weeds.
- ✓ Water every week if there is less than an inch of rain.

### August

- ✓ Inspect trees for insects and disease.
- ✓ Inspect trees for signs of mechanical and animal damage. Use shelters if needed.
- ✓ Control weeds.
- ✓ Water every week if there is less than an inch of rain.

### September

- ✓ Inspect trees for insects and disease.
- ✓ Inspect trees for signs of mechanical and animal damage. Use shelters if needed.
- ✓ Control weeds.
- ✓ Water every week if there is less than an inch of rain.

### October

- ✓ Fertilize if needed.
- ✓ Inspect for signs of mechanical and animal damage. Use shelters if needed.
- ✓ Install sun/winter crack protectors (tree shelter, cardboard, double layer of tree wrap ) on trees with thin bark.

### November through March

- ✓ Winter pruning for crossing or dead branches.

### April

- ✓ Remove sun protectors.
- ✓ Remove tree staking from last year's transplanted trees.
- ✓ Mulch.