



Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department – Parks Field Office

Dear Prospective Tree Planter:

Thank you for your interest in having a street tree planted. The City of Berkeley's Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department plants street trees at no additional cost to Berkeley residents and property owners. In exchange, residents agree to care for the tree by weeding, watering and mulching for at least the first two years after planting. In addition, residents agree not to prune the trees and instead, report any pruning needs or vandalism of the trees to the Parks Division Field Office. Our main concern is that the newly planted trees be given approximately 20 gallons of water once a week, especially during warm weather seasons. It also is important to keep grass and weeds away from the mulching area, without damaging the base of the tree.

The following are answers to commonly asked questions about our Street Tree Planting Program:

What is the schedule for applications and planting?

City of Berkeley street tree planting is performed throughout the year. Applications are processed as they are received. Due to the number of applications received, actual planting can take up to one year after an application is received.

How many trees will be planted?

Forestry staff will locate as many planting sites as will fit along the length of the property. In most cases, one or two trees will be planted. Depending on the tree species, the spacing between trees will be between 20 and 35 feet. When determining planting locations, many factors are taken into consideration including underground utilities (gas, water, sewer and communication lines), utility poles, service lines, driveway approaches, fire hydrants, stop signs and other street signs, proximity to intersections and the mature size of tree species.

What species will be planted?

The City selects a tree species appropriate to the width of the parkway strip – the space available for the tree to grow. The City strives to designate one species for a multi-block section of a street while varying the species planted on adjacent streets. If a species has not been designated for a specific street, Forestry staff will be happy to work with the neighborhood to select an appropriate species.

The city has a list of acceptable species for specific size parkway widths. A colorful and descriptive notebook entitled "Illustrated guide to the Street Tree Planting Program" is available at the reference desk of each branch of the Berkeley Public Library. This notebook is a reference guide for residents wanting to know more about the different species of street trees the City plants.

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What about concrete and shrubbery conflicts?

The City will remove concrete when necessary, at no additional cost to the resident. Only concrete that is necessary for the planting of the tree will be removed. Residents wishing to remove more concrete may obtain a permit to hire a contractor from the City Permit Center. Once the site has been marked and the applicant notified, it is the applicant's responsibility to either transplant or remove any plants they want to save. Any plants that the resident does not wish to save will be removed in the process of tree planting.

How can I organize the entire block to plant trees?

Entire streets can sign up together for tree planting. This is an excellent way to maximize the effects of newly planted trees on a street. Provide neighbors with a copy of the application and ask them to send the completed form back to us. They also may contact the Parks Division Field Office and we will send them a copy of the application. The Planting Application Form is available from the City's website, www.cityofberkeley.info/trees/planting.html

Who owns the parkway strip (planting strip between the curb and sidewalk) and who owns the street trees?

The planting area between the sidewalk and the street is part of the City right-of-way. It is also called the parkway or planting strip. It is owned by the City of Berkeley and an easement is granted to the adjacent property owner for "permitted" uses. Permitted uses include planting shrubs and flowers. However, written permission is required to plant, prune or remove City trees (as provided by the Berkeley Municipal Code, chapter 12.44). By default, all trees growing in the City right-of-way are property of the City of Berkeley whether or not they were planted with a permit. The city assumes responsibility for the trees and has an active program to ensure they are properly maintained.

Please fill out the attached tree planting application and return it to us by mail or by faxing it to (510) 981-6665. Before planting occurs you will notice that the site has been marked with white paint where the tree(s) will be planted. Tree care instructions will be left at the door at the time of planting.

If you have other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Parks Field Office at 981-6660 or send e-mail to trees@ci.berkeley.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Jerry Koch
Forestry Supervisor

1325 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94702 Tel: 510.981-6660 TDD: 510.981-6903
Fax: 510.981-6665
e-mail: trees@ci.berkeley.ca.us webpage: www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/parks