



Long-term Tree Maintenance

Long-term tree maintenance is an essential part of the equation to achieve SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE TREES. The addition of the following recommendations to maintenance specifications could prove useful to attaining long-term tree health in urban landscapes.

Structural Pruning

Failure to prune properly can lead to included bark and other structural weaknesses which can lead to injury to people and property. Pruning during dormancy is usually best. If trees are pruned during the growing season, we recommend doing the last pruning in an adequate amount of time before cold weather in order to allow growth to harden off before potential cold damage. We recommend Dr. Ed Gilman's book, *An Illustrated Guide to Pruning*, as a guide to proper pruning techniques.

Soil & Leaf Tissue Testing

Taking core soil samples to the depth on the root zone is a very good idea to get a read on nutrition and pH adjustments. We suggest a group of samples; one for the healthy trees in an area and a separate sample for any unhealthy trees. Samples should be taken at least once a year, or whenever trees appear to be unhealthy.

Separate samples should be taken for trees that may exhibit noticeable problems. Samples can be submitted to your local university extension testing service or a private lab. Once you have received the results from these tests and recommended treatments, we can help analyze and work with your maintenance contractor to determine the appropriate next actions.

Vertical Mulching

Vertical mulching is almost always very beneficial to trees of all ages. Vertical mulching increases water and air infiltration to the tree root zone.

Vertical mulching can be accomplished by using an auger with a 1 ½ -2" bit and drilling holes roughly 16 – 18" apart in a grid pattern approximately 18" deep. Always locate and avoid underground utilities and other obstacles before digging. Use caution to avoid remaining portions of the wire basket or other underground obstacles.

Drill the holes out to (or beyond if possible) the drip line of the tree. Start the process a safe distance from the trunk and keep the bit away from any large diameter roots. Fill the holes with the following mixture:

- Aged pine bark or gravel (gravel will not break down and thus will provide longer benefit)
- Fertilizer, Lime, Etc. based on soil and tissue analysis

Trees should be watered thoroughly immediately before and after vertical mulching is completed.