

Checklist for Planning a Community Tree Planting Project

Selecting tree species and locations: Visit our website for guidelines and links for deciding what tree(s) to plant.

[Selecting Trees for Urban Landscapes](#)

Planting the tree: There is more to planting a tree than just digging a hole and putting the tree in the ground. Root inspection and proper planting depth are just two things needed to ensure that you have a healthy, long-lived tree. The [Tree Owner's Manual](#) is a good basic guide for planting and for tree care.

Planning the project:

- Volunteers - We suggest two or three adult volunteers for each tree planted, especially if the root ball is large.
- Tools - Scissors for removing tags and ties from trees, shovels, rakes, and wheelbarrows are the basics. If the soil is very compacted, you may need a pickaxe or digging bar. If your trees are in large pots or are B&B (root ball covered with burlap) you may need a hand cart for moving them.
- Supplies - Obtain mulch and compost. We recommend 1 bag of hardwood mulch per tree and, if desired, one bag of compost for every two trees; the compost is used as a top dressing. We do not recommend enriching the soil in the planting hole.
- Stakes for protection from mowers – Trees on some sites may benefit from have a substantial wooden stake on each side of the tree to prevent mowers from damaging the trunk. We recommend 1x1 inch, 5-6 foot stakes driven about a foot into the ground; these should be placed just outside the root ball.
- Contact Miss Utility <http://va811.com/>
- Mark planting locations.
- Pre-digging the holes - Digging holes before project day may be helpful if there are lots of trees to plant or if the soil is compacted and difficult to dig, but keep these things in mind. 1) The planting hole should not be deeper than the root ball. You will not know in advance how deep that is, so getting the hole started is acceptable; digging deep is not. 2) Consider returning the loose soil to the hole to avoid someone stepping in the hole and hurting themselves. 3) Permission should be obtained for pre-digging holes on public property.
- Watering after planting – It is important to water tree thoroughly after planting. We recommend saturating the planting hole after planting. This is best accomplished by inserting the hose down into the loose soil around the tree in several different locations around the root ball. Ensure that you have enough hose or a way to deliver lots of water to every tree.
- Mulching – Mulch around the tree 2-4 inches deep. Place the mulch around, but not on, the root ball. The mulch should never touch the trunk. (What you see in parking lots is not acceptable!) The addition of compost as a top dressing is optional.

Planting day – The project should begin with instruction for your volunteers on how to properly plant, mulch, and water a tree using the information in the links above. Remember to remove all tags, ties, and stakes that come with the tree. Have someone inspect each tree for proper planting depth. Add mulch, use stakes if necessary, and water very, very well.

Post care – Watering from May – October is the most important thing you can do for a newly planted tree in the urban environment. Get watering information here [summer tree care](#) .

PLEASE NOTE THAT TREE PLANTING MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CITY ARBORIST FOR ALL PROJECTS ON CITY OF RICHMOND PROPERTY (EXCEPT SCHOOL GROUNDS) AND ALSO BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR PLANTINGS ON PARK PROPERTY. THE CITY ARBORIST WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT FOR EACH TREE PLANTED.