



Sponsor-A-Public-Shade-Tree Program

The Town of Acton is proud to offer a Sponsor-A-Public-Shade-Tree Program. If you have proposed a location that is suitable for a tree and agree to water the newly planted tree for at least the first growing season, the Acton Tree Warden will consider the request while compiling a final list of suitable locations. These trees are typically planted on publicly owned land, street right of ways, or where no public space is available on adjacent private properties as provided by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87.

TIPS FOR WATERING A NEW TREE

Newly planted trees are under stress due to their new environment so they will require extra care. Proper watering is essential to bringing moisture and oxygen to the tree roots. An important factor in tree survival is providing the right amount of water. The first 3 years are the most critical, but also pay attention to watering needs throughout the tree's life.

Frequency depends on soil drainage. Soils that drain quickly will require more frequent watering than those that drain slowly. The best way to know how often and how much to water a tree is to check the soil moisture at 6 inches below the surface. Water when dry. For the first 3 years after planting: If the soil is dry, provide about 1-1/2 gallons of water per diameter inch of the trunk. All other years: Because soil type and weather conditions influence the demand for water, irrigation schedules and amounts vary. Newer trees need watering every week to establish a robust root system. Periodically check to see if that's a good fit and adjust accordingly.

SITE CONTROL

As noted above, the majority of the trees will be planted on public land. However, Massachusetts law does permit the expenditure of public funds to plant trees up to twenty (20) feet back from the edge of the public way, with landowner permission. The new trees will be Public Shade Trees, as legally defined, and are therefore given a degree of protection from removal, unless they are deemed to be hazardous by the Tree Warden.

No trees shall be planted in locations where they would interfere with future sidewalks.

PROJECT SCOPE

The type of tree shall be selected by the Tree Warden. The final decision to plant a tree will be based on several factors such as soil type, proximity to road salt, overhead wires, etc. and the need for diversity of plantings to avoid tree cover loss due to disease and insects.

RIGHT TREE-RIGHT PLACE

Matching the right tree to the right place is the best way to ensure the health and longevity of our trees. A tree that has its needs met is better able to withstand the pressures of insects, disease, or other stress factors. Choosing the right tree for the right place ensures vibrant health, reduces maintenance, and maximum benefits. Take note of site factors such as sun/shade, soil type, and drainage, and find a tree species that fits those characteristics. Equally important is considering the mature size of the tree compared to the space constraints of the location, including overhead utility wires, nearby structures and hardscapes, and other plants.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please contact Ryan Hunt, Acton Tree Warden, at (978) 929-7743 or by email (treewarden@actonma.gov)

RESOURCES

[Tree Owner's Manual](#) – US Forest Service resource

[Plan Before You Plant](#) – Eversource resource

[Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association](#)