

# Ballston Spa Street and Community Tree Guide

The Park and Tree Board of Ballston Spa is an advisory committee to the Village Trustees. The Board of trustees recognizes the role that trees, shrubs, and plants provide for our community. The Park and Tree Board of Ballston Spa has been created to provide an orderly framework to establish a responsible program for planting and maintaining street trees. Before planting, maintaining, or removing a street tree contact the Village of Ballston Spa Park and Tree Board.

Trees provide many benefits to a community. They create the oxygen we breathe; reduce air and water pollution; reduce storm water runoff; provide shade; reduce energy costs; reduce the urban heat island effect; and act as wind breaks, sound barriers, and visual screens. Trees also reduce noise pollution and absorb particulate matter from emissions. They improve our quality of life and can be aesthetically pleasing. Well maintained street trees and parks enhance property values for the local community.

Trees are among the longest-lived organisms on earth, but the average lifespan of an urban tree is only a fraction of its natural potential. This is due mainly to conditions created by people and the urban environment. Choosing the right tree for the right site, proper planting and proper care will give your trees the healthy start they need to grow strong and live long<sup>(1)</sup>. A street tree is any species found in the right-of-way along a road as defined by the land worked by a municipality <sup>(2)</sup>.

Source(s) 1 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html>  
2 United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service <https://www.state.sc.us/forest/urbben.htm>

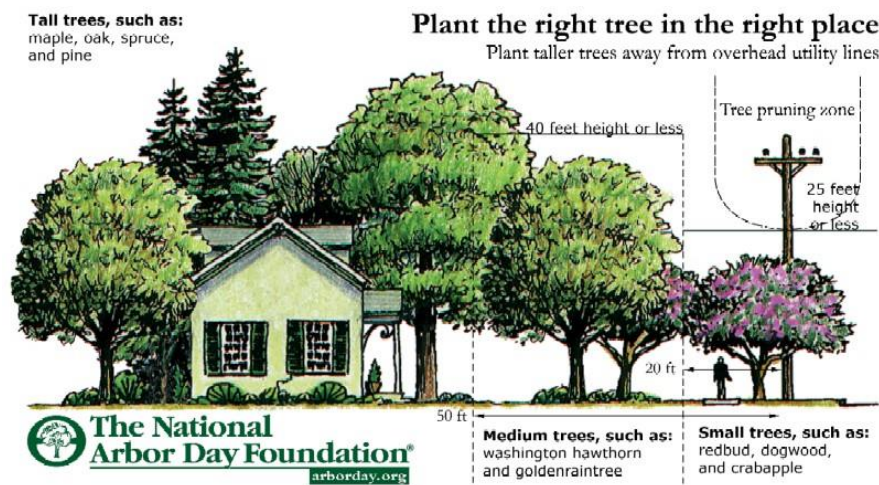


Image Courtesy of the National Arbor Day Foundation

## Tree Maintenance Required of Private Property Owners

Taking pride in our community requires street tree maintenance. Here is what you need to know.

- Every owner of any tree or shrub on private property overhanging any street, sidewalk or right-of-way within the Village shall prune the branches so that such branches shall not obstruct the light from any street lamp, overhang the side walk to obstruct use of the full sidewalk or obstruct the view of any street intersection.
- In addition, property owners are also responsible for pruning branches on their own trees or shrubs as well as those in the public right of way abutting their property so that there shall be a clear space of eight feet (8') above the surface of the street or sidewalk. Said owners shall remove all dead, diseased or dangerous trees, or broken or decayed limbs which constitute a danger to the safety of the public.
- Taking pride in our community requires street tree maintenance. Please go to <https://ecode360.com/9056534> for more information.

## ***Street Tree Maintenance and the Roll of the Village***

The Village shall have the right to prune any tree or shrub on private property when it interferes with the proper spread of light along the street from a streetlight or interferes with visibility of any traffic control device or sign. The Village shall have the authority to prune such trees and shrubs and charge the cost of this work on the owner's property tax notice.

## ***Dead or Diseased Tree Removal on Private Property***

The Village shall have the right to cause the removal of any dead or diseased trees on private property within the Village, when such trees constitute a hazard to life and property, or harbors insects or disease which constitute a potential threat to other trees within the Village.

- The Village will notify in writing the owners of such trees and request permission to enter the property in order to inspect the trees and make recommendations.
- It shall be unlawful for any person or firm to engage in the business or occupation of removing trees within the Village without first applying for and procuring a license. For more information refer to the Village tree code.

## ***Duties of the Spa Park and Tree Board***

The Park and Tree Board, in consultation with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and/or the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, will develop and periodically update a list which contains allowable species for small, medium, and large trees to be planted on public property and in the right of way adjacent to public thoroughfares within the Village of Ballston Spa. The right-of-way varies by streets, again check with the town before attempting any maintenance on a tree in the right of way.

- *No species other than those contained in the list may be planted within the Village without the written permission of the Village Park and Tree Board.*
- *The Village shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees, plants and shrubs within the lines of all streets, alleys, avenues, lanes, squares and public grounds, as may be necessary to insure public safety or to preserve or enhance the symmetry and beauty of such public grounds.*
- *The Village Park and Tree Board may cause to be removed any tree or part thereof which creates an unsafe condition or is injurious to sewers, electric power lines, gas lines, water lines, or other public improvements, or which is affected with any injurious fungus, insect or other pest.*
- *It shall be unlawful as a normal practice for any person, firm, or Village department to top any tree on public and park properties. Topping is defined as the severe cutting back of limbs to stubs larger than three inches in diameter within the tree's crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree.*
- *Trees severely damaged by storms or other causes, or certain trees under utility wires or other obstructions where different pruning practices are impractical may be exempted from this ordinance at the determination of the Village Park and Tree Board.*

## ***What To Do If You Need a Street Tree Removed***

- *Contact the Village of Ballston Spa Tree and Park Board*

# Village of Ballston Spa Park and Tree and Park Board

## Recommended Tree Selections

The following are minimum standards for DEC Urban and Community Forestry tree planting projects. Where local ordinances and guidelines require more stringent standards, use more stringent standards. All tree planting work should be supervised by a qualified professional and follow the ANSI A300 standards for tree planting. [The right tree for the right place.](#)

**Planning:** Before planting, consider a tree’s full growth potential to see how the location of the tree will affect overhead or underground utilities. Planting trees is a major investment and by selecting the right tree for the right place, one can save time, money, and potential problems down the road. Proper planning is crucial for successful projects. Where underground or above ground utilities are present, contact NewYork811 (<https://newyork-811.com/>)

**Site Selection:** Sites should be inspected prior to planting. Avoid potential conflicts with utilities, buildings, lines of sight and other infrastructure. Other above ground characteristics to consider are light, slope, wind and salt exposures. Please remember, planting a tree is a long-term investment. Proper site selection/preparation and species selection is vital to a successful project.



1. The soil at the planting site should be analyzed and tested for pH, structure, texture, density, nutrients, and percolation.
2. Tree species selected for planting should be appropriate for the selected planting site.
  - Choosing the right tree and its purpose including the overall size and shape of the tree when mature.
  - Consider the growth rate of the tree, flowers, foliage color, is the tree a shade tree, a windbreak or placed for privacy?
3. Tree maintenance which is critical to the tree survival in the first several years
4. Trees should be spaced an appropriate distance apart.

TREE SIZE	SPACING BETWEEN PLANT MASSINGS	MIN. SPACING FROM WALL OF 1-STORY BUILDING	MIN. SPACING FROM CORNER OF 1-STORY BUILDING
Large trees (60' +)	45'	20'	15'
Medium trees (30-60')	35'	15'	12'
Small trees (30')	25'	8-10'	6-8'

No tree with a mature trunk diameter greater than 12 inches will be planted in a tree lawn less than 3 ft. wide; a planting space of at least 50 sq. ft. is recommended

Trees will not be planted within 30 ft. of an intersection or 15 ft. of driveways and alleys.

Trees will not be planted within 10 ft. of utility poles or hydrants.

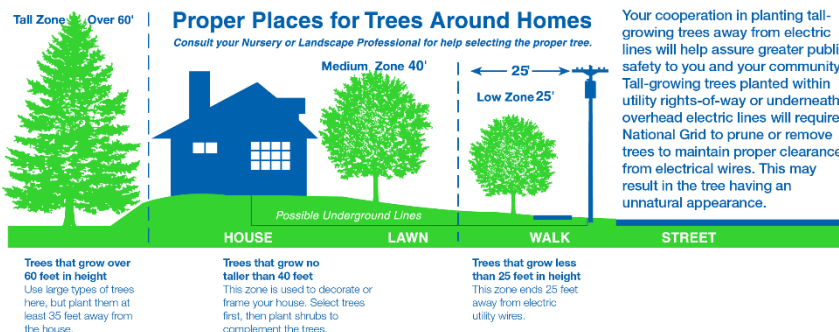
Between your house and 25 feet from the utility pole, plant trees up to 40 feet in height.

Plant a tree with a growth potential of more than 60 feet, at least 35 feet away from your house.

\*Only trees with mature heights less than 30 ft. should be planted under or near power lines.

The Arbor Day Foundation and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation can provide some basic information on planting the right tree in the right place.

- Arbor Day Right Tree Right Place: <https://www.arborday.org/trees/righttreeandplace/>
- NYS DEC How To Plant a Tree: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html>
- National Grid Recommendations: <https://www.nationalgridus.com/Tree-Trimming>



### Tree Species Selection:

1. Species will be selected to fit the planting site, taking into consideration soils, rooting space, overhead space, adjacent utilities and buildings, drainage, and other site conditions.
2. All species need to be appropriate for the hardiness zone in which they are located.
3. All trees used will be true to name. Size and grading standards will conform to the American Standard for Nursery Stock as established by American Horticultural.
  - (<https://www.americanhort.org/education/american-nursery-stock-standards/>).
4. It is recommended that no species make up more than 10% of the entire urban forest population.

### Planting Standards:

1. Inspect nursery stock at time of delivery for damage and poor quality.
2. Planting holes will be dug a minimum of 12 inches larger than the diameter of the root system or root ball. Preferably, the hole should be two to three times as wide as the root ball.
3. Trees will be planted no deeper than previously grown with allowance for settling. The root flair should be at or slightly above ground level.
4. Strings and twine will be removed from trunk of tree. Burlap and wire baskets will be removed or rolled down into hole.
5. Backfill with existing soil when suitable. Avoid using excessive amounts of organic matter.
6. When sensitive species are exposed to direct sun, wrap lower trunk with a tree wrap. Remove wrap after first growing season.
7. Bark mulch will be applied around the tree, up to 3 inches deep, in a circle which extends beyond the planting hole. Mulch should not touch trunk above root flair.
8. Only dead, damaged or poorly located branches will be removed using proper pruning techniques.
9. All bare root trees (and balled and burlapped trees in exposed, windy areas) will be staked or guyed to keep them upright. Use commonly accepted staking techniques. Stakes will be removed approximately one year after planting.
10. Newly planted trees will be watered at the time of planting, and for best results, water, soaking the root zone once per week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather until they are established.
11. In caring for and handling trees prior to planting, all precautions customary in good trade practice will be taken.
12. A minimum one-year warranty is recommended for trees planted by a contractor.

## Resources for Tree Planting Specifications and Information:

### Tree City USA Bulletins & Resources

- <https://www.arborday.org/trees/bulletins/archive.cfm>

### Cornell Cooperative Extension Resources

- <http://ccesaratoga.org/gardening-landscape/trees-shrubs>

### How to Plant a Tree NYS DEC Webpage

- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html>

### Trees are Good from ISA

- <http://www.treesaregood.org/>

### Urban Horticulture Institute from Cornell University

- <https://blogs.cornell.edu/urbanhort/>

### University of Florida- IFAS Planting Trees in Landscapes

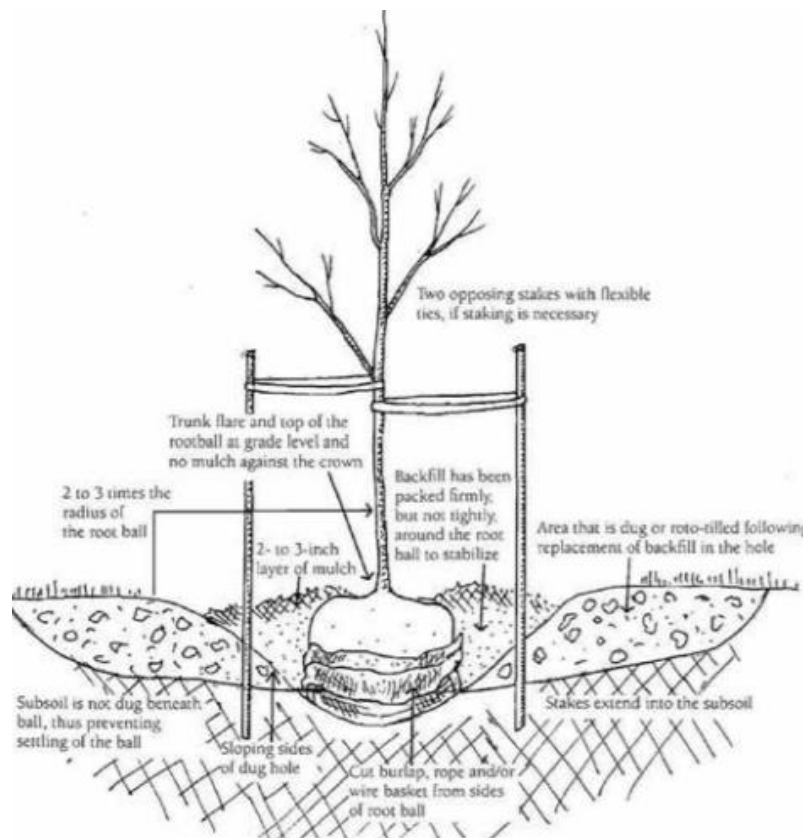
Information includes: urban design, site selection, species selection, nursery stock selection, planting details and specifications, pruning and maintenance.

- <https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/planting.shtml>

### Positively the Pits!

Successfully strategies for sustainable streetscapes from University of Massachusetts

<http://www.umass.edu/urbantree/publications/pits.pdf> November 2003 issue of TCI 7/1/04.



Drawing by Marcia Eames-Sheavly.

The Cornell Guide for Planting & Maintaining Trees & Shrubs 2005.  
Glood, G.L. & Weir, R.III. Cornell Cooperative Extension. Inf.BHN24.

