

## Ballston Spa Street and Community Tree Guide

**Ballston Spa Park and Tree Board** The Park and Tree Board of Ballston Spa is an advisory committee to the Village Trustees. The Board of Trustees recognizes the important role that trees, shrubs, and plants provide for our community. The Park and Tree Board of Ballston Spa was 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 Village Hall at (518) 885-5711.

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 an urban tree's average lifespan 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>

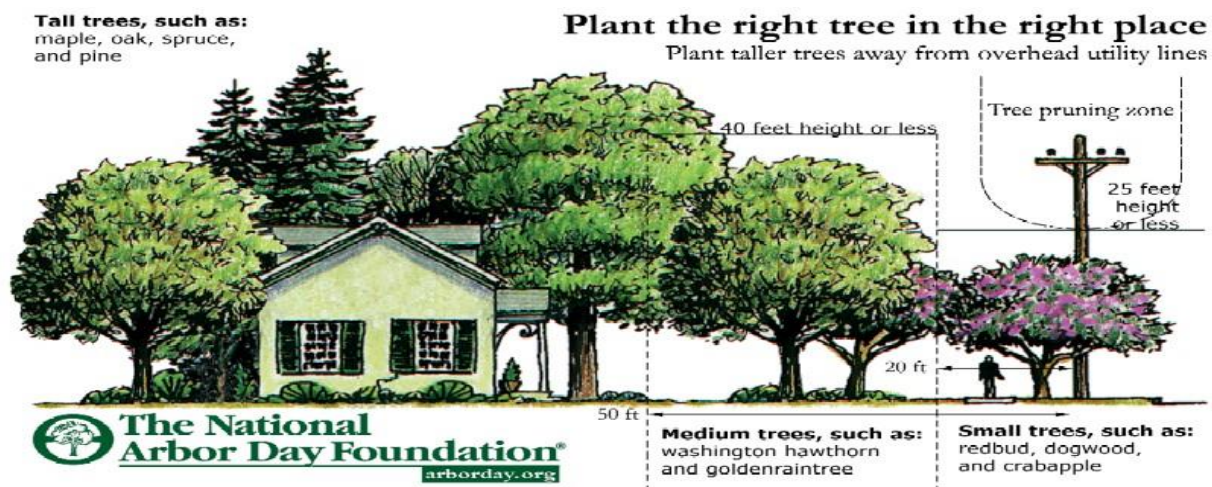


Image Courtesy of the National Arbor Day Foundation

**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 on the tree section of the village code.

**Street Tree Maintenance and the Role 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 the 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 village 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 on public land or in the right of way without the written permission from village hall.*
- *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 ensure 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 Village Hall at 518-885-5711.

Looking for more information how to select a tree for planting, pruning, or even working with an arborist check out the resource links below.

**Tree City USA Bulletins & Resources**

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

**Cornell Cooperative Extension Resources**

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

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.

