

Forming a Community Tree Care Team

The best place to start in growing our community forest is to make sure that young trees become established and reach maturity. Creating a Community Tree Care Team to care for young trees will help ensure they receive consistent and quality care. It is also a great way to volunteer with TreePeople as part of our summer call to action!

Community Tree Care Teams can keep socially distant, as needed, while caring for different trees at a time.

1. Walk and Chart Your Site

- Create a map of the site or each street. Make a simple map or use a Google map image.
- Walk and chart the following:
 - **Young trees** — Young trees are typically under 25 feet tall, planted in the last 1 – 4 years and have a trunk diameter of less than 4 inches.
 - **Empty tree wells** — These are empty cuts in the concrete that used to have trees. They may provide sites for a future tree planting.

2. Form a Team and Make Plan

- A team starts with you. Consider inviting family, friends, neighbors, businesses, student groups, civic groups, scouts, neighborhood groups, church groups or others.
- Choose a name for your team.
- Register your team with TreePeople **here** so we can acknowledge what you are doing.
- Get started:
 - The most important task will be to ensure the trees receive deep watering.
 - Choose a day/time each week to care for the trees.
 - Create an invitation and let others know when you will be doing tree care and where to meet.
 - Consider what you will need:
 - Source of water and how you will transport it
 - Gloves
 - Supplies for watering
 - Tools for weeding



Providing Basic Tree Care

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Basic Tree Care

Water

Lack of watering is the main reason young trees fail in an urban environment. The most important part of tree care is to ideally provide weekly deep watering through the summer. Slowly, deep watering your tree allows the water to get down into the roots.

- Check to see if your tree needs water:
 - Dig down into the soil under the tree about as deep as your finger
 - Grab a handful of soil and squeeze into a ball
 - If the soil holds together, it is wet – don't water your tree!
 - If the soil doesn't hold together, it is dry – deep water your tree!
- Deep water your tree:
 - Slowly, fill the basin around the tree with water and let it soak into the ground.
 - Continue to do this until the tree has received 15 gallons of water.



How much is 15 gallons?

- 15 1-gallon plastic milk jugs
- 3 5-gallon buckets
- Slowly run a hose into a bucket. Based on the time and size of the bucket will determine how long to run the water. For example, if it takes 2 minutes to fill a 5-gallon bucket, you will need to leave the hose at the tree root zone for 6 minutes.

Weeds and Grass

Weeds and grass compete for the vital nutrients and water the tree's roots need. There may be a lot of weeds and grass to remove at first, but once removed, there will only be new sprouts to remove each week.

- Remove weeds and grass from within 2 - 4 feet from the base of the trunk.
- Dispose of them in a green bin.

Berms

A berm is the circle of dirt around the base of the tree that creates a basin for watering.

- Create a berm just outside the root ball, about 4-6 inches high.
- Firmly compress the soil so no water will escape.

OPTIONAL

Mulch

Mulch is ground up tree limbs and branches that are placed on the top of the soil to hold moisture and create beneficial microorganisms.

- Add a 3 - 4 inch thick layer covering the exposed soil around the base of the tree.
- Mulch should be kept 5 - 6 inches away from the trunk of the tree.
- Tree trimming companies can deliver a pile of mulch for free. Avoid mulch from diseased trees and palms.

RESOURCES AND VIDEOS

TreePeople has a variety of resources and videos to help.

- For additional How-Tos and resources, go **here**.
- For TreePeople videos on tree care, go **here**.
- For information on watering mature trees, go **here**.