

Healthy Tree Care and the Urban Environment

If you are considering installing some trees at your property, there are some things to consider. Trees provide many benefits in an urban setting, including:

- Providing oxygen
- Reducing soil erosion
- Providing shelter from wind and sun exposure
- Providing habitat for birds, animals, and beneficial insects
- Increasing property values

Trees in an urban environment can become stressed, due to:

- Poor drainage conditions on site (flooding or drought)
- Chemical exposure (de-icing salt or pollution)
- Adverse soil conditions (loss of topsoil, pH)

Follow these tips below to provide proper tree care for watershed protection:

Fertilizer and Plant Health – Perform a soil test first, to identify a soil deficiency. Use a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer. Applying too much fertilizer can lead to poor tree health.

Integrated Pest Management – Do not use a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Contact your local landscaper or informed lawn care provider for best management techniques. Spot treat only. Use non-toxic products.

Proper Watering – Individual tree species have different watering needs. Do your homework to identify how much water your trees require per week. One inch of water per week (including any major rain events) is suitable for most Michigan species.

Right Plant...Right Place – Avoid monocultures. Biodiversity is key! Know your plants! Assess your yard for soil conditions, drainage, light/shady areas, etc.

Mulch – Avoid over-mulching (no mulch volcanoes) which can kill trees. 2 to 3 inches of mulch ‘doughnuts’ is adequate.

On-Site Consultation – Contact your local landscaper or tree care professional before applying any fertilizers or pesticides. These professionals can provide proper identification of tree species; review of existing and future problems and solutions; recommendations on invasive plant removal; and cultural or remedial measures that the homeowner can perform.