

Seven Tree Care Basics: Help Your Trees Live Longer & Healthier

Planting: Thoughtful, intentional planting is key to ensuring a tree's health and longevity. Make sure the planting hole is two to three times wider but no deeper than the tree's root ball. Plant trees promptly and make sure they get adequate water so that roots do not dry out.

Soil Aeration: Soil that is compacted causes a tree to slowly decline because the root system is unable to get enough oxygen. Soil compaction can be avoided by aerating the soil – physically loosening soil with injected devices or a shovel, being careful to avoid damage to the tree roots. Adding a top layer of mulch on open soil will also help slow compaction and maintain healthy airflow to your trees' roots.

Watering: Both over- and under-watering can be harmful for trees. Watering is critical for all trees in dry spells as well as young or newly transplanted trees. Soil around your trees should be monitored to ensure that adequate water is provided.

Professional Pruning: Pruning should follow standards established in ANSI A300, published by the American National Standards Institute. See our PRUNING page for a description of some of the practices laid out in ANSI A300 – and some of the methods that will do harm to your trees.

Location, Location, Location: Trees need proper sunlight and should be appropriate for the climatic conditions and/or plant hardiness zone of the area. Visualize the actual height and spread the tree could reach. Be sure there are no power lines in its path and the tree is a good distance from structures and other plants.

Easy on herbicides and chemicals: Applied in the right place, at the right time and in the right amount – pesticides can be used properly to treat pest and disease problems on your property with low impact to the surrounding environment. Improperly used, herbicides can damage your trees and plants, cause unhealthy runoff into groundwater, and affect pet and human health. Professional advice and services are the best route to making sure you treat pest or disease problems in your trees – with fewer problems and negative side effects. If you choose to apply chemical solutions – be sure to carefully review the label warnings and follow the instructions for application.

Prevent Accidents: Automobiles, storms and even lawnmowers can cause bark damage and wounds on trees. One can avoid tree wounding by planting them in sheltered locations or by providing some sort of barrier. Be very careful while using lawn mowers and weed trimmers, as careless use can damage the roots and bark of even large trees. Check for any damage incurred during heavy storms, and treat it promptly. Remember, the integrity and stability of a tree changes over time.