

TUSCOLA URBAN FORESTRY GUIDELINES  
TUSCOLA, ILLINOIS

- I. Purpose
- II. Planting Standards and Procedures
- III. Tree Type and Quality
- IV. Pruning Standards
- V. Tree Protection in Construction Zones

**Purpose**

This manual, *Tuscola Urban Forestry Guidelines*, is authorized and enacted by Ordinance 2001-O- \_\_. Its purpose is to provide standards and regulations for the planting, maintenance, and care of City-owned trees within the City of Tuscola.

The City, and not the adjacent property owner, owns all of the trees on public right-of-way, a collection that currently exceeds 1,150 in number. This “urban forest” is an important, valuable, and renewable asset to our community. Only through proper procedures and care can this inventory of trees be maintained and improved.

The standards contained in this manual apply to the planting, maintenance, removal, and care of all trees owned by the City of Tuscola, whether performed by private individuals, City employees, or contractors. Private property owners are encouraged, although not required, to follow many of these guidelines in the care and maintenance of the trees on their own private property.

## **Planting Standards and Procedures**

- Species and cultivars that exceed a trunk diameter of 15” at breast height within 40 years are not to be planted where the parkway is less than 5’ wide.
  - Trees must be planted at least 10’ from driveways and alleys, 10’ from fire hydrants, 20’ from utility poles, 35’ from intersections, 35’ from traffic signals, and 5’ from property lines.
  - Medium to large trees should be separated from other trees by at least 40’
  - Small trees should be separated from other trees by at least 25’
  - Trees planted under or adjacent to utility lines must be of a species and cultivar whose height at maturity will not interfere with these lines.
  - On roads without sidewalk and curbing, adequate space should be left when planting trees for the installation of sidewalks, curbs, or both.
  - When sufficient space is not available in the public right-of-way for a new planting due to utility conflicts, City trees may be planted on private property with the consent of the property owner.
- 
- The planting hole should be 24’-36’ larger in diameter than the diameter of the root ball
  - The root ball should be placed on undisturbed subgrade to prevent settling.
  - The root flare, where roots spread at the tree base, should always be at the ground line. Often, nurseries mound soil around the tree base, hiding the root flare. The root flare must be identified, and the tree should be planted at the proper depth.
  - Any twine holding the burlap around the root ball must be cut and the burlap loosened from around the top of the ball. Wire shall be removed from at least the top half of the root ball prior to backfilling.
  - The planting hole should be backfilled and gently tamped to prevent air pockets around the ball. Ample watering should be done at the time of planting.
  - Backfill soil should not be amended unless planting in building rubble or extremely poor or disturbed soil.
  - The trunk of the tree should be vertical and reasonably near plumb.
  - Excess soil should be removed from the planting site. 3”-4” of wood chip mulch should be placed around the base of the tree. Avoid piling up mulch directly in contact with the trunk.
  - Protective tree wraps should be removed at the time of planting.
  - Staking is not normally recommended. If necessary, however, follow the standards contained herein.
  - Newly planted trees should only be pruned to remove broken or dead limbs.

## **Tree Type and Quality**

- All trees must be true to species, variety, and/or cultivar.
- All trees must have normal trunks, leaders, tops, and branches typical of the species, variety, or cultivar, and exhibit evidence of proper nursery pruning practices.
- All trees must be free of mechanical injuries and not show evidence of recent or previous wounds on the trunk.
- All plants must be balled and burlapped. The twine used to tie the burlap must not be plastic. The balls should be of firm earth from the original soil in which the tree grew. No trees with broken, loose, or manufactured balls are acceptable.
- Plants on the list of approved medium to large trees must have trunks at least 2" in diameter measured 6" above the ground and a soil ball of at least 24" in diameter. Plants on the list of small trees must be at least 1 ½" in diameter measured 6" above the ground and a soil ball of at least 18" in diameter.
- Trunks should be wrapped with special tree-wrapping paper to protect them from injury during handling.

## Recommended Trees for Planting on Right-of-Way

### Medium to Large Trees (35' and taller)

Black Maple	Hesse European Ash	Swamp White Oak
Red Maple	Blue Ash	Scarlet Oak
Sugar Maple	Maidenhair Tree*	Shingle Oak
European Alder	Kentucky Coffeetree*	Burr Oak
Sugar Hackberry	Goldenraintree	Baldcypress
Katsura tree	Tuliptree	American Basswood
Yellowwood	Cucumber Tree	Littleleaf Linden
Turkish Filbert	Sour Gum	Crimean Linden
American Beech	Amur Corktree	Silver Linden
European Beech	Pear (modern)	Lacebark Elm
Hardy Rubber Tree	Sassafras	Japanese Zelkova
White Ash	White Oak	* male only

### Small Trees

Hedge Maple	Pagoda Dogwood	Hophornbeam
Amur Maple	Flowering Dogwood	Musclewood
Paperbark Maple	Hawthorns (thornless)	Sargent Cherry
Tatarian Maple	Carolina Silverbell	Japanese Flowering
Shadbush, Serviceberry	Laurel Magnolia	Cherry
Hornbeam, Ironwood	Sweetbay Magnolia	Pear (modern)
Redbud	Crabapple (modern)	Japanese Tree Lilac

### Prohibited Trees for Planting on Right-of-Way

All varieties of Fir	Female Kentucky	Populus Species
Boxelder	Coffeetree	All Cherries
Norway Maple	American Holly	All Plums
Silver Maple	All Junipers	Douglas Fir
Ohio Buckeye	All Cedars	Bradford Pear
Tree of Heaven	All Walnuts	All Large-fruited Pears
Mimosa Tree	All Butternuts	Black Locust
Silk Tree	All Pecans	All Willows
Paper-bark Birch	Sweetgum	Japanese Pagoda Tree
White Birch	Osage Orange	Mountain Ash
Canoe Birch	All Large-fruited Apples	All Arborvitaes
European White Birch	Morus Species	All Hemlocks
All Chestnuts	Empress Tree	American Elm
Catalpa	Royal Paulownia	Red Elm
Russian Olive	All Spruces	Slippery Elm
Green Ash	All Pines	
Female Ginkgo Trees	London Plane tree	

## **Pruning Standards**

- Pruning shall consist of the removal of dead, dying, diseased, interfering, or obstructing branches. The natural shape of the tree shall be preserved by using “thinning” cuts when pruning. A thinning cut removes a branch at its point of origin, or shortens a branch to a lateral large enough to assume a terminal role. The use of climbing spurs is prohibited.
- Branches too heavy to handle shall be pre-cut to prevent splitting or bark peeling. Where necessary to prevent tree or property damage, branches shall be lowered to the ground by proper ropes and equipment.
- All final pruning cuts shall be made sufficiently close to the parent limb without leaving protruding stubs, cutting just outside the branch collar.
- Drop-crotch pruning shall be employed where branch reduction is necessary, such as in partial death, disease, or poor structure. Drop-crotch pruning should consist of cutting back to a lateral branch at least one-third the diameter of the final pruning cut.
- Crown reduction shall employ the drop-crotch pruning technique and shall only be undertaken in utility line clearance or for safety or health considerations. A tree-like form typical of the species shall be maintained.
- Clearance pruning shall consist of removing lower bottom branches. Height clearance guidelines shall be 9’ over sidewalks, 10’ over access drives, 14’ over secondary streets and alleys, and 16’ over arterial streets.
- Treatment of cuts and wounds with dressings is not generally recommended.
- Indiscriminate pruning techniques such as “topping” are prohibited.

## **Tree Protection in Construction Zones**

- It is the responsibility of the contractor on any construction project to protect all public trees within the construction zone from damage due to construction activities.
- Fencing or barricades with marking tape shall be erected in a perimeter at a distance of at least 5' for small trees (6" diameter or less) and at least 10' for all other trees.
- Soil, excavated material, gravel, crushed aggregate, concrete, or any type of construction materials may not be stored or deposited at the base of trees or within the drip line of trees on public right-of-way.
- Installation of underground utilities shall be at a depth of not less than 24" within the drip line of a City-owned tree. Where possible, the installation should be performed as far from the trunk of the tree as possible.
- Where surface excavation is necessary within the drip line of a tree, the roots exposed by the excavation shall be cleanly cut with a chain saw, hand saw, lopper, or similar method. Ripping, tearing, chopping, or shredding of roots with a backhoe, axe, hatchet, pick axe, or machete is not allowed.
- If removal of a City-owned tree is necessitated by construction activities, the contractor is responsible for obtaining a permit for the removal, and for performing the removal. The City will not perform convenience removals.