

# Make the Commitment to Care for Your Trees!



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

Trees need care—especially young trees. Plan on spending time each season tending your trees and shrubs, and maintaining any protections you have installed. Below are suggested steps to help your trees and shrubs flourish, which will make a difference in protecting and improving water quality, wildlife habitat, and our climate. For more information on tree planting and maintenance, visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/>.

## SPRING

- ❑ Inspect trees; look for signs of damage from animals or winter weather.\*
- ❑ Wash salt off trees near roadways while the ground is still frozen.
- ❑ Remove competing vegetation around trees.
- ❑ Clean and straighten tree tubes.
- ❑ Remove tree tubes from trees with a trunk diameter of 2" or more.
- ❑ Water trees weekly if the surrounding soil is dry and thawed.
- ❑ If using mulch, apply it in a ring around the base of the tree; the mulch shouldn't touch the tree trunk.
- ❑ If using a weed mat, clean off and straighten the mat.
- ❑ Plant a tree to celebrate Arbor Day & Earth Day! \*\*

## SUMMER

- ❑ Inspect trees for disease, damage from insects and other wildlife, and mechanical injury.\*
- ❑ Remove competing vegetation around trees.
- ❑ Remove debris and trim weeds within your tree tube or fence ring.
- ❑ Water trees weekly—or more during hot weather—if the surrounding soil is dry.
- ❑ Maintain 2-4" of mulch around the tree's base.



**Note:** To prevent the spread of oak wilt, avoid pruning oak trees from March–September.



## PROTECT YOUNG TREES

Seedlings planted in rural areas may need a physical barrier against hungry wildlife, such as tree tubes or fence rings. Tree tubes should be at least 5 feet tall (to prevent deer damage), and flush with the ground (to prevent rodent damage).

Seasonal Tree Care Continued...

## FALL

- ❑ Prune young trees to remove dead, damaged, or diseased limbs.\*\*\*
- ❑ Water trees weekly if the surrounding soil is dry and thawed.



## WINTER

- ❑ Inspect trees for disease, insect and other wildlife damage, and mechanical injury.\*
- ❑ Adjust tree tubes as needed to be sure your trees are protected.
- ❑ Prune young trees—including oaks—to remove dead, damaged, or diseased limbs (October–February).\*\*\*

\* Consider consulting an ISA-Certified Arborist

\*\* See our tree planting and maintenance

guide, [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html).

\*\*\* After removing dead or diseased limbs, clean pruning tools with a 10% bleach solution to reduce the spread of disease to other trees.



## AVOID MULCH VOLCANOES

When using mulch, don't mound it. Apply 2-4" of mulch to cover as much ground as the width of the crown. Mulch shouldn't touch the trunk where the roots attach to the trunk, as it can cause mold, pest damage, decay, or even the tree's death.

## TREE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Check trees regularly throughout the year and especially after storms

Take a look at the tree, at a distance and up close. Look for defects such as:

- ❑ dead, broken, or loose branches;
- ❑ missing bark on the trunk or branches;
- ❑ a leaning trunk or raised ground around the tree;
- ❑ cavities (like those birds and squirrels may nest in);
- ❑ cracks in the bark or at branch connections; and
- ❑ the presence of mushrooms, fungus, or wood-eating insects anywhere on the tree.

Found signs of stress or damage? Use these resources:

- ISA-Certified Arborists can provide professional advice about trees. Visit [www.treesaregood.org](http://www.treesaregood.org) to find one near you.
- For more information on tree planting, as well as invasive species identification and removal, visit [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html).
- Find additional information on urban tree care at [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/120460.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/120460.html).
- To learn more about oak wilt, visit [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/46919.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/46919.html).



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