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## Top 10 Things To Do For Your Trees

*Toronto's trees exist in conditions very different from those of a natural forest setting. We need to provide them with special care to protect them from the harsh urban environment. Follow the tips below to help your trees survive and thrive.*

### Did you know?

The number one killer of newly planted trees is lack of water.

Creating a rich planting hole with manure and peat moss can be detrimental to trees. Select a species that tolerates your existing soil, since roots will need to spread beyond the planting hole.

Peat moss is mined from peat bogs which destroys these important ecosystems. Use compost or well-composted manure instead.

The majority of mature trees along urban streets and in backyards suffer from drought. Regular watering will help mature trees resist attacks from pests and disease.

Damage by lawnmowers and weed trimmers is one of the major causes of death of young trees. Use mulch to keep grass away from tree trunks.

### 1. Plant the right tree in the right place

Ensure there is adequate above and below ground space. Determine the soil type and light conditions of the planting location. Select species based on these important factors.

### 2. Water regularly

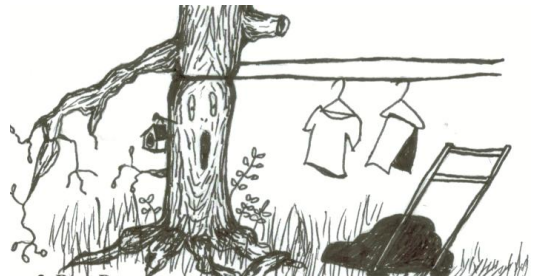
For the first three years after planting, trees require diligent watering. Place a hose at the base of the tree on a slow drip for 15 minutes, two times per week. For more mature trees, spread a soaker hose out under the tree's canopy and allow water to slowly seep out for about an hour once per week. You can also use a regular hose with no nozzle. Move the end of the hose around under the tree's canopy during the hour that the hose is trickling.



*A soaker hose laid in concentric circles is the best way to water mature trees*

### 3. Avoid tying, nailing or attaching anything to trees.

Even string can cut off the flow of water and nutrients and strangle a tree. Always remove staking materials after one year.



### 4. Protect the trunk

The base of a tree is fragile and can be easily damaged. A six centimeter deep circle of wood-chip mulch around the tree can prevent this. Avoid piling mulch up around the trunk. Place mulch in a doughnut-shape around the trunk and spread out as far as the branches reach.



*Avoid mulch volcanoes*



*Spread mulch in doughnut shape*



Factsheets in the series:



*The Three "P"s of Healthy Trees*



*Top 10 Things To Do for Your Trees*



*Selecting a Tree Care Company*



*Inventories: The Place to Start*



*Improving the Urban Forest in your Neighbourhood*



*Protecting Our Trees: City of Toronto Bylaws and Policies*



*Fundraising for Your Urban Forest Project*



*Made in the Shade: Shade Trees for Sun Safety*



*Volunteer Opportunities in Urban Forestry*



*Trees: The Key to Cleaner Air*



**5. Avoid the use of de-icing salt in winter**

Salt applied to driveways, walkways, and other areas eventually enters the surrounding soil. This can affect the health of trees, even those located several meters away. Chop away ice and use sand instead.

**6. Avoid digging, tilling or excavating near trees**

Root damage may take a few years to become evident but can be fatal. Remember that 90% of a tree's roots are in the top 45 centimeters (18 inches) of soil and can extend up to three times the width of the canopy



*Tree roots spread far and are shallow*

**7. Watch for early signs of stress**

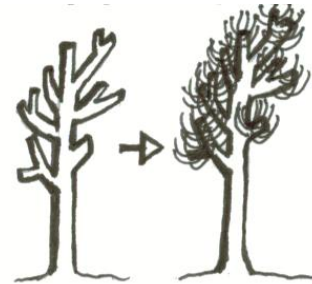
Look for weak foliage, discolouration, early leaf loss or visible signs of pests or disease. Consider all possible factors that may be contributing to poor tree health before deciding upon a treatment.

**8. Avoid chemical pesticides and fertilizers**

Use organic alternatives on lawns and trees. Improve your soil by adding organic matter, such as compost or well-composted manure, each spring and fall. Sprinkle a three centimeter (one inch) layer of compost on the ground as far out as the branches reach.

**9. Do not prune without knowing proper techniques**

Improper pruning cuts can seriously injure and even kill a tree. They can also result in structural damages that can never be corrected. Never try to keep a large tree small by pruning or topping it. Never use tree wound paint as this interferes with the tree's natural healing processes.



*Improper pruning results in poor structure and can even kill a tree.*

Often, homeowners decide to prune their trees themselves to save money. This can lead to irreversible damage as well as serious personal injury. Before making any cuts, read a pruning book approved by the International Society of Arboriculture or visit [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com).

**10. Consult a certified arborist**

Tree assessment, diagnosis, treatments and pruning should be done by an experienced professional. In addition to these services, arborists can provide advice on preventative care of mature trees, such as minimizing damage during home renovations or construction.

*Follow the tips in 'Selecting a Tree Care Company' when hiring someone to care for your trees!*