



Town of Watertown

Office of the Tree Warden
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Spring Tree Care Tips

1. Finger Pruning of Sucker Growth: When you are out on your daily walk, you can prune trees with your fingers! Look at tree trunks for sprouts that are in the early stages of poking themselves out of the bark and break them off with a quick turn of your hand and fingers. Spring is the perfect season to relieve trees of these growths before they develop into strong branches that will require tools and more time to remove. Removing sucker growth now while it is just leafing out will save the tree energy that it can apply to growth higher up on the tree.

2. Tree Mulch: Where ever you see a tree with mounds of mulch piled around its trunk, take you foot and push the mulch 6 inches away from the trunk, all around. This year the DPW is not spreading mulch on trees but landscapers hired by homeowners are doing it. We do need to get the word out to homeowners that this is not recommended.

3. Dead Tree Notification: When you notice a dead street tree, please contact me by phone 617-972-6426 or e-mail chayward@watertown-ma.gov with the location of the tree and I will make that determination and follow the proper procedures, if necessary to remove the tree.

4. Removal of Plastic Tree Guards: Help us remove the plastic guards that have been used in the past to protect newly planted trees from weed whackers. The trouble is, over time these plastic guards retain soil and moisture and create an unhealthy environment for the trees. So you have the ok to remove them and throw them away. The key to protecting trees from weed whackers is to keep grass from growing within a foot-wide circumference of the tree. So feel free to pull grass and weeds during the growing season. A light covering of grass clippings or pine needles will help discourage weeds.

5. Check up on last years new street trees: The website provides a list of trees planted last year. We can check them out and identify any that are not leafing out so that they can be replaced as stipulated under their warrantee. If you have already identified such a tree, give me a call at 617-972-6426. I will take the appropriate action to have the tree replaced.

THANK YOU for helping take care of our trees. Everyone can make a difference.

Chris Hayward, Tree Warden