

## **Forestry FAQ's**

- **How Do I request an inspection of, or work to be performed on, the tree in front of my house?**

Please call **311**, the City of Buffalo Call and Resolution Center, to register a concern or request an inspection or work on trees within the city right of way. A reference number will be assigned to your request so that you can track its progress. Just call 311 or (716) 851-4890, or visit online at: [www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City\\_Departments/Citizens\\_Services/311\\_Self-Service](http://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/Citizens_Services/311_Self-Service)

- **Tree roots from the city tree are affecting my sewer system/sidewalk?**

Most root and sewer/sidewalk conflicts can be addressed without the removal of the adjacent street tree. The City does not automatically remove healthy trees for root conflicts, and will inspect the tree and meet with your contractor to determine the best way to facilitate the repair required to both fix the problem and preserve the tree.

As per the City Charter, property owners are responsible for maintenance of their sewer service lines. Tree roots require oxygen and water to grow and cannot penetrate sewer lines that are solid and free of cracks.

Sidewalk condition will be assessed by the Division of Engineering, and if determined to be the result of street tree damage, will be added to the City's sidewalk replacement program.

Please call 311 to request a root and sewer/sidewalk inspection.

- **I want the tree removed in front of my house, will the city do it?**

The Forestry office makes every effort to protect our tree canopy and preserve the benefits it produces. ALL requests for tree removal will be inspected by the Forestry office, to determine if the tree meets the following criteria:

- The tree is dead or dying
- The tree is structurally unsound and poses an immediate hazard that cannot be addressed through corrective pruning
- The tree has a terminal disease or insect infestation which cannot be treated and may spread to other healthy trees
- The tree will not survive a proposed construction project, following a plan review with developer that all applicable tree protection methods have been exhausted and removal/restitution is provided for as part of project.

- **How can I get a new tree planted in front of my house?**

Please call 311 to request a new tree to be planted within the city right of way (most of the time that is between sidewalk and curb). The city plants trees every spring and fall and the list is based on individual property owner requests. The Forestry office will inspect the location to determine if it is suitable for a new tree. If the location is suitable for a new tree, the location will be reserved for an upcoming planting contract.

If you would like to plant a tree within the city right of way yourself, Forestry authorization is still required. Please call 311 and request an inspection for a planting permit. No permit is required for planting a tree on private property.

- **What type of tree can be planted within the right-of-way?**

The best practice is to match the right tree for the right place and to maximize the tree canopy. Requests for specific tree types to be planted will be considered, but cannot guarantee tree type due to availability from growers. Ornamental trees are selected where overhead utility wires are present or the growing space is limited. Please see the City of Buffalo Species Listing on the Forestry web page for suitable street tree choices.

- **Can anyone perform work on trees within the right-of-way?**

Any city resident may perform minor work on the trees in the right of way in front of or adjacent to their house at any time, as long as they do not use power tools or a ladder.

All other/major tree work requires a tree service contractor with a current Landscape License through the City of Buffalo to perform work on trees within the right of way. To view an updated listing of licensed landscape contractors, please visit: [http://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City\\_Departments/EDPIS/Licenses/LicensedContractors](http://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/EDPIS/Licenses/LicensedContractors) , and use the drop down box for Landscape and Snow Removal contractors. Licensed contractors must also contact the Forestry office for a Tree Work Permit before the work is performed (see below).

- **Do I need a permit to prune, plant or remove a tree within the right-of-way?**

Yes, a DPW Tree Work Permit is required to prune, plant or remove trees within the City of Buffalo right of way. There is NO FEE to obtain the permit. Please see Tree Work Permit information posted on the Forestry web page.

Note: Residents who are just performing minor pruning of basal sprouts and/or low branches in front of their house with hand tools (no chain saws), do not need a permit.

- **Tree limbs from the city tree are interfering with utility wires, can these limbs be pruned?**

Tree limbs that are interfering with primary overhead utility wires (pole to pole) should be referred to National Grid for inspection at 1-800-642-4272. Residents should call 311 for tree limbs that are interfering with secondary or service wires (pole to house). These will be inspected by the Forestry office and a work order will be created to prune as necessary.

- **National Grid recently pruned the tree in front of my house and now the tree looks unbalanced?**

National Grid is responsible to maintain the electrical utility easement. This involves clearing mature trees from primary utility wires. Where mature trees conflict with these wires, the tree pruning contractor hired by National Grid must prune to provide adequate clearance and reduce the risk of power outages. Line clearance tree trimming is not the same as residential or municipal tree trimming. In many cases the trees in question are genetically preprogrammed to grow to heights that are not compatible with the space under the electric distribution system. The trees have to be trained to grow away from the conductors. Death of these trees as a result of utility pruning is rare, though if you have concerns, please call 311 and the Forestry office will inspect.

- **My maple tree has black spots on the leaves; will this kill the tree or spread to other trees?**

Different species of maple trees, especially Norway maples develop black spots on the leaves during the late summer/early fall. This non-lethal disease is known as “Maple Tar Spot”, please see the info sheet on Forestry web page. The spots are caused by a fungus that infects the newly developed leaf tissue in the spring and causes early defoliation of the leaves. Infected leaves that drop harbor the fungus that can be spread to neighboring trees. The best method to reduce the frequency of infection is to rake up and destroy fallen leaves in the fall.

- **I’ve noticed ants on the trunk or at the base of my tree, what can be done?**

Carpenter ants build their nests by hollowing out existing decay in trees; they do not eat the wood. Worker ants take mouthful-sized chips of wood to the nest entrance, where they deposit the chips. This results in a pile of coarse sawdust at the base of a tree. Carpenter ant nests in trees are an indication of decayed wood. All trees have some level of decayed wood. Trees with hollows or advanced decay can be inspected by calling the [311 Call and Resolution Center](#) for a Forestry inspection. Carpenter ant nests do not directly weaken the tree and do not usually require control.

- **I've noticed a blotchy green fungus growing on the bark of my tree, what is it?**

The fungus you are referring to is actually a fungus and algae growing symbiotically together known as a lichen. Lichens pose no threat to the tree and are purely cosmetic. Individual lichen species also serve as, dye sources, food for animals, air pollution indicators and even medicines.