

City of Altamonte Springs

TREE CARE INSTRUCTIONS

One of the many beautiful things about the City is its lush tree canopy. We strive to provide a vibrant and aesthetic landscape for residents. For over 20 years, Altamonte Springs has received the Tree City USA award by the Arbor Day Foundation for implementing solid urban forestry management. Thank you for investing in our forest's future!

How to Plant & Maintain Your Tree



PLANTING

- Handle the tree carefully when unloading and transporting.
- Keep trees moist whether in container or in the ground.
- Dig a hole twice as wide and the same depth as the root ball, no deeper.
- Plant the trees so that the top of its root ball is level with the top of the existing ground. Planting too deep is a major cause of failure.
- Backfill with the soil removed from the hole. Build a 6" high tree ring around the edge of the hole.



STAKING

- Stake only if necessary; for example, if the tree or palm will not stand on its own due to potential vandalism or strong winds.
- Loosen the straps if they begin gouging the trunk. Remove the stakes and straps completely after one year.
- Use flexible materials such as strapping or commercially available ties that give as the tree diameter increases and as the tree moves. Biodegradable material is recommended.
- Do not use rope or wire, even if the wire is inside rubber hosing. Stakes and ties should remain on the trees no longer than one year to avoid girdling.



WATERING

- Water the tree every other day for the first six months. After six months, water twice a week. Don't let the soil dry out. Be sure to water outward.
- When watering, fill the ring of soil around your tree with water until it does not drain immediately.
- Don't pile up soil around the trunk. Maintain the soil ring around your tree for one year, and then remove it by pulling the soil away from the trunk.
- Use a hose to soak the soil around your tree thoroughly; or add a bubbler to an existing irrigation system. Sprinklers alone will not provide enough water.

NOTE: Any water restrictions invoked by the St. John's Water Management Districts override water instructions. Low volume irrigation is permitted anytime with a hand-held garden hose provided it is fitted with an automatic shutoff nozzle.

Tree Questions? For more information, call (407) 571-8883.



FERTILIZING

- Begin a fertilization program within the first year of planting. Fertilize between March 15 and October 31 when your tree is actively growing. Don't fertilize between November 1 and March 14 when your tree is dormant.
- Broadcast fertilizing or fertilizer plugs/stakes are recommended. Use a slow release fertilizer.
- Fertilize lightly after the first year using a balanced fertilizer. If micronutrient deficiencies are suspected, have a soil test completed and supplement the fertilization program accordingly.
- Don't use a fertilizer with a weed killer near the drip line.



MULCHING

- Using mulch around your tree will help to keep the soil cool and moist. Mulch an area at least three times the diameter of the root ball to a depth of 2-4" with wood chips, bark mulch, shredded mulch, leaves or pine needles.
- Keep the mulch several inches away from the tree or palm trunk. Replenish mulch as it decomposes maintaining a 2-4" layer over the life of the project.
- Don't apply more than a 2-4" inch thickness of mulch, it will damage the trunk.
- Keep grass and weeds at least 2 feet away from the trunk.



PRUNING

- At the time of planting, only dead, damaged, rubbing or cross branches or fronds should be removed. Remove sucker sprouts from the base of the tree after planting.
- Corrective/structural pruning can begin approximately one year after planting. Do not remove more than 1/3 of the live crown during one growing season.
- Encourage a single central trunk in standard trees, and three to five main trunks in multi-stemmed trees. Don't top your tree. It will cause v-shaped crotches and weak growth to develop.
- Don't allow branches to graft together. When removing a branch, leave the branch collar attached to the trunk. The branch collar is the swelling at the base of the branch.
- Don't cut too close to the trunk or leave stubs of branches. Large wounds and stubs increase the chances of disease and insect problems.
- Don't use a string trimmer or lawn mower to remove sprouts.

Future Altamonte Springs Trees (F.A.S.T.) Program

Become a part of a growing number of residents helping to create a greener future for our beautiful City by participating in the Future Altamonte Springs Trees (F.A.S.T.) program. It is designed to efficiently replenish the city's trees by planting trees in the right-of-ways along roads which front the properties of city residents. The Park Landscape Management and Operations Division purchases assorted tree varieties to plant throughout the City. You can request to have a tree planted on the right-of-way next to your property for free. In return, you must agree to be responsible for maintaining your tree.

To adopt a tree, contact the City's arborist at (407) 571-8883 to meet with you to review the planting site and assist you in selecting the right tree for the location. Tree orders are accepted from October 1 through July 1. Planting typically begins in mid-October.

For more information on the F.A.S.T. program, visit www.Altamonte.org/FAST.



Park Landscape Management & Operations

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