

# TREE MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES



## Watering and Mulching:

- Water and mulch trees on a regular basis. Water beneath the foliage of the tree in a circle three feet from the trunk and let the water seep in rather than run off. Aim for moist, not wet.
- Spread a two- to three-inch layer of mulch over the soil to trap in moisture, but leave a little circle of breathable soil around the truck of the tree.

## After a Storm:

- After each storm, inspect trees for loose or fallen limbs.
- Never remove limbs that have electrical lines running through them; call your electricity provider.
- Any work requiring chainsaws, or work done off the ground, should be performed by a professional.
- If using a chainsaw, wear the proper gear (hard hat, leather gloves, eye and ear protection).

## Seasonal Maintenance:

- Each season, inspect trees - check for any rot, decay or fungus and address problems immediately to prevent weak trunks and roots. Cracks along a limb indicate a weak branch that should be removed.
- Prune trees: For flowering trees, prune upon completion of budding. For other types of trees, prune in the winter (usually February) while the root system is dormant and dead branches can be more easily observed.

## Pruning Techniques:

- Prune the inside branches to thin out a tree; avoid cutting off the top branches to reduce height (topping) and never cut random lateral branches to restrict width (tipping).
- Keep all tools sanitized to prevent the spread of disease.
- Focus on removing dead or dying branches and thinning out thick areas to facilitate air flow.

## Selecting a Tree for Planting:

- Consider a tree species that grows well in the type of soil, shade and water levels on the property.
- Look for a strong tree with healthy leaves, good foliage color, well-attached bark and a single trunk.
- Trees prone to certain insects or fungal infections need expensive products to stay healthy.
- Fast-growing trees require more care because of their weak limbs and trunks.
- Consider the shape and size of the mature tree; a tree's structure determines its ability to withstand storms.

## Hiring an Arborist:

- Hire an arborist (tree specialist), to perform annual inspections, prune trees, and clean up after storms.
- When hiring an arborist, make sure he/she is: 1.) Insured for property damage, personal liability and workers' compensation; 2.) Certified by a professional organization, such as the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). To find someone certified in your area, go to: [www.isa-arbor.com/findarborist](http://www.isa-arbor.com/findarborist)
- For a local resource, contact the Massachusetts Arborist Association (MAA) at 508-653-3320.