



BLUE WATER BALTIMORE  
HERRING RUN  
Nursery



# Street Tree Care

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**Blue Water Baltimore**

# Our mission:

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To restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities.

We achieve this through **advocacy**, **education** and **restoration**.



**TREES  
COMING  
SOON**

Questions?

(410)254-1577



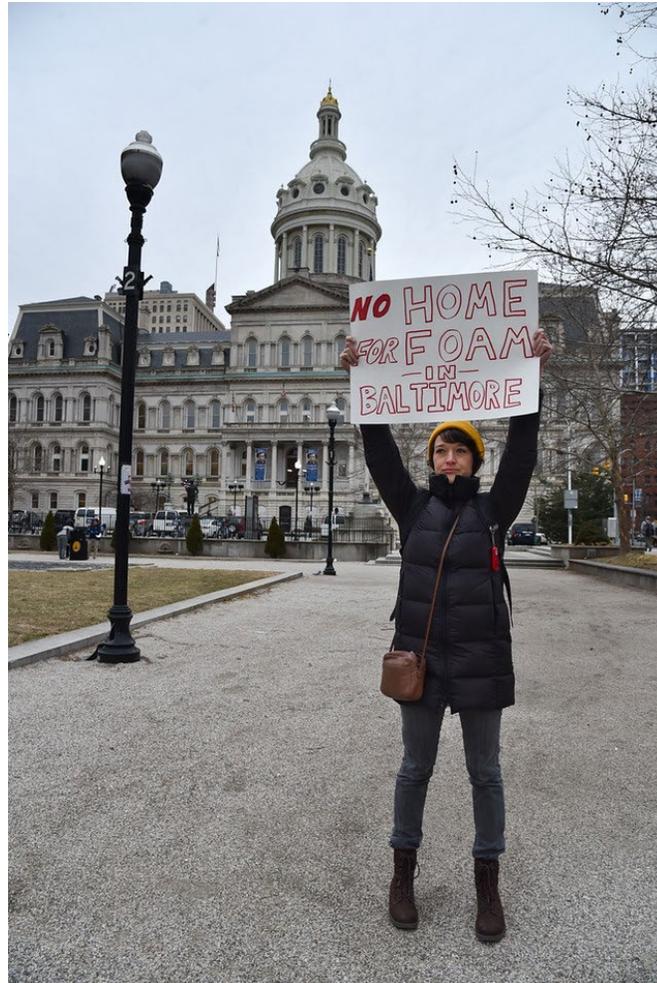


Where  
We  
Work

# Advocacy



**Water Quality Monitoring**  
**Pollution Reporting**  
**Outfall Screening Blitzes**



**Polystyrene Foam &  
Plastic Bag ban**



**Sewage Back Ups**



# Education

Ecoliteracy refers to the understanding of the principles that govern the health of the Earth and its ecosystem.

Blue Water Baltimore offers educational programs for all age ranges from preschool to seniors.



Blue Water Baltimore





# Herring Run Nursery

## Why native?

- Adapted to our local climate
- Preserve biodiversity
- Pollinator Support
- Conserve water
- Aesthetics/ beauty
- Require less water & maintenance
- Support native insects and wildlife



# Restoration & Forestry

- Tree planting
- Tree pruning
- Weeding/ invasive removal
- Mulching
- Watering
- Protecting
- Tree identification
- Champion trees
- Free tree giveaways



# We Love Urban Trees!

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- Green “corridors” connect parks and provide essential habitat for wildlife.
- Street trees act as natural air conditioners and cool off residents who are resting on Baltimore’s famous marble stoops.
- City trees add beauty and increase property values.
- Trees provide natural stormwater management in a landscape of *impervious surfaces* (hard surfaces such as pavements roads, sidewalks, and rooftops that do not allow water to soak into the ground). Slowing rainwater runoff reduces flooding during heavy storms.
- Urban foraging opportunities!

# Who is responsible?

Street trees are in the **public right of way**, meaning they are City property and under the care and jurisdiction of Baltimore City Recreation & Park's Forestry Division.



(New “preferred size” for tree beds in Baltimore City is 4x8’)

# ONE TREE

CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



## People Power

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TreeBaltimore is an initiative of Baltimore City Recreation & Parks to plant and protect our urban trees

- Collective goal of 40% tree canopy coverage
- Collaborate with a variety of greening groups and individuals across the city
- Manage the TreeKeepers program to engage residents in caring for our canopy.

**It takes a community of people to grow a community of trees!**



# Proper Street Tree Care: The Short Version

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The best love you can give your local tree is regular watering in the summer & a nice helping of mulch each season. That's all folks!



# Why Mulch?

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## Mulch...

- mimics benefits usually enjoyed by trees in a forest setting (leaves and other organic materials break down into soil)
- acts like a sponge and holds moisture
- suppresses grass and weeds
- reduces trunk damage caused by weed wackers
- protects against root sunburn (for certain species with shallow roots)

# How to Apply Mulch



- Use natural, organic mulch derived from plants such as hardwood and softwood bark, leaves, and cocoa hulls.
- Avoid synthetic (rubber) and dyed mulch. These materials leech chemicals and pollute our waterways.
- Apply 2x / year or as needed.
- Remember: Mulch donut, not volcano! Spread out across the entire tree bed and never pile it against the tree trunk.
- Learn more on our mulching blogpost!  
<https://bluewaterbaltimore.org/blog/4-24-2020-mulch-madness/>



# Water is Life

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- **Watering is the most important factor for tree survivability for recently planted trees with small root systems.**
- After that period, occasional watering during a drought will help them survive and thrive.
- Mature trees do not require routine watering. But look for wilted/brown leaves in times of extreme drought
- To learn more, visit our blog:  
<https://bluewaterbaltimore.org/blog/tree-care-summer-watering/>



# Best Practices for Watering

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*Where?*

- Water directly around the base of the tree trunk

*When?*

- Water your tree immediately after planting. After that, water weekly *first thing in the morning*. Evening watering is also okay but avoid watering during the heat of the day. Afternoon watering increases evaporation and chance of disease.

*How much?*

- **A young tree requires 20 gallons of water per week between May and October for at least the first two summers after planting.** It is important to note that *rain is only a substitute for watering if we have a one inch rain storm or more!*

*Flow rate?*

- Water *slowly* to allow for maximum root absorption. Slow drip watering provides small quantities of water directly to the root zone. It allows for deep infiltration so water can reach 8-12 inches into the ground instead of just wetting the surface. This encourages deeper root growth, which leads to a more anchored mature tree. Use a gator bag, greenwell or 5 gallon bucket



# DIY Barriers, Borders, Walls, & Fences

Residents install homemade structures around their local tree beds for a variety of reasons:

- Aesthetics
- Protect flowers or shrubs
- Block litter from collecting
- Prevent dogs from entering
- We salute everyone who works hard to beautify their community! **But what does the tree actually need to thrive?**



# Soil Compaction

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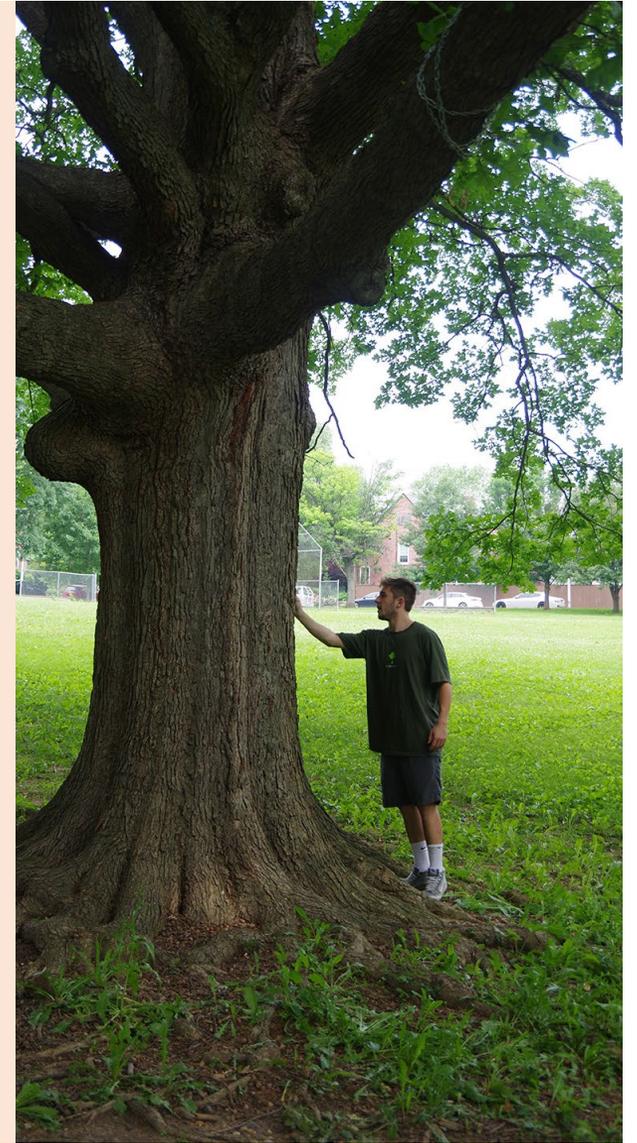
From the tree's perspective, the **main reason to install a fence should be to prevent soil compaction.**

- Each time someone walks across a tree bed, their weight condenses the soil.
- Urban areas often have intensely compacted soils due to decades of development.
- Compaction destroys fragile roots ability to absorb water. It can eventually block water from entering the soil at all, turning the bed into an impervious surface.
- It is difficult to reverse.
- While many DIY fences around tree beds do block pedestrians from further compacting the soil, these barriers also stop rainwater from entering.
- **Barriers must be raised at least 2 inches off the ground to allow rushing stormwater to enter the soil and get absorbed by the tree roots.**



# Show Me Your Root Flare

- DIY barriers may raise the soil level inside the tree bed so that the base of the tree trunk (called the *root flare*) becomes buried by inches of soil or mulch.
- Buried bark will decay over time and invite pests and disease.
- Raised soil levels also significantly increase the likelihood of roots growing up above ground level and girdling the trunk. These issues all lead to early death.
- The soil in the tree bed should always remain level with the surrounding sidewalk.





Nope!





**Nope!**



**YES!**



# Stakes & Ties

- Stakes act like training wheels on a bike for the tree – they hold it up straight and steady it from falling over
- Generally, stakes and ties be removed after the first year to allow the tree to become established and stand on its own.
- If not removed, they can girdle the tree, or cut off circulation to the leaves.



# Flowers

For some residents, tree beds may offer the only opportunity for gardening.

Additional plants add beauty and color to your block but in most cases, it isn't great for the tree. It comes down to a competition for much needed resources (food & water).

If you must, at least wait until the tree has been in the ground for a full year

Aim for native perennials. Perennial plants (unlike annuals) return each year in the spring, and so you won't keep disturbing the soil. Repeated soil disturbance harms shallow tree roots.

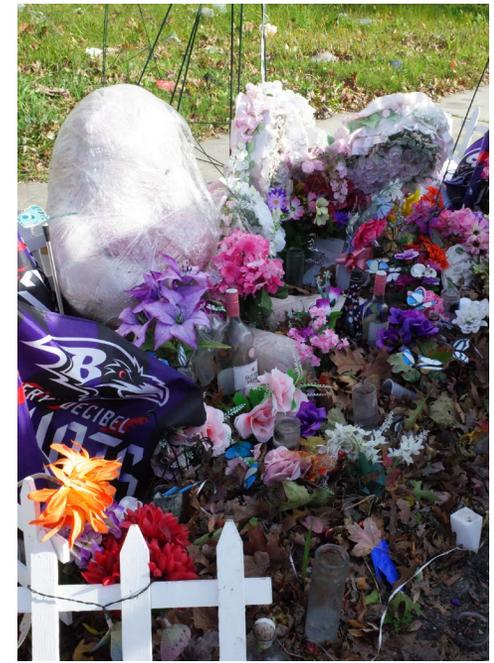
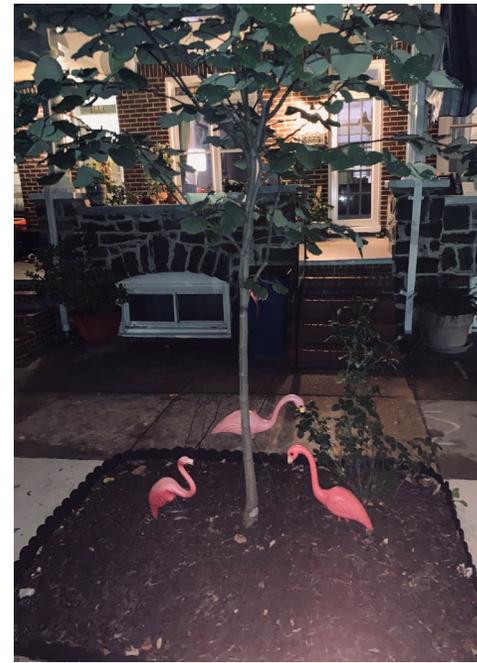
Native plants are adapted to our local climate and support local wildlife!



# Grass, Weeds & Mowing



- Mowing is not only more aesthetically pleasing for residents and passerby, but also allows young trees to absorb more water (grass competes).
- If grass grows close to the tree trunk, weed wackers inadvertently get too close and create wounds in the bark at the base of the tree. Weed wacker damage is one of the main causes of young tree mortality!



# Misc. Decorations

We encourage Baltimore residents to take ownership of their local tree beds! Let's add more beauty to our city! Most decorations are generally harmless to the tree *unless* they:

- dig into the soil (root disturbance)
- are wrapped tightly around the trunk or branches (restricts growth.)
- create litter that enters our waterways



'Suckering' due to mower damage



Pruning is a Science & an Art



Split due to co-dominance



'Limbing Up' too young- "Lollipop" tree

# Corrective Pruning: Basic Tips & Tricks

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Prune trees when they are young to ensure a strong, healthy canopy in the future.

We prune for:

- Health (remove broken, diseased, dead or crowding limbs)
  - Structure (promote proper growth and improve future health of the tree. Establishing a dominant leader)
  - Accessibility (in an urban environment, 'limb up' lower branches that are blocking pedestrian access)
- Wait to prune until the tree has been in the ground for at least 3 years. Trees only need to be pruned every five to seven years.
  - Never prune more than 25% of your tree in one season. (The leaves provide food for your tree so if you remove too many, it will starve.)
  - ***Never prune your own street tree without some prior knowledge of tree biology.*** If you want to learn proper pruning techniques to maintain young trees on public property, become a Baltimore [TreeKeeper!](#)
  - If your street tree needs pruning, call 311. You can also download the 311 app or [submit a request online](#).



# Proper Pruning Clean Cuts:



**No!**



**Yes!**

# Tree Species Selection: Right Tree, Right Place

## Before planting checklist:

- Know your species. Think about the height and spread, soil and sunlight conditions. Take into consideration overhead powerlines, low areas where rainwater collects, nearby pedestrian right of ways, etc.





# Maryland Big Tree Program:

## Champion & Notable Trees

Baltimore City Champion Live Oak in  
Bolton Hill

Learn more: <https://www.mdbigtrees.org/>

# Additional Resources

## General Street Tree FAQ'S

- Visit Baltimore City Forestry's web page: <https://bcrp.baltimorecity.gov/forestry>

## How Can I Get A Tree?!

- Don't have a street tree yet? A request can be made to the City by completing a [Tree Planting Request Form](#). If you have an existing dead tree or stump, you will also need to contact the City for removal prior to planting.
- You can find a list of approved street tree species here: [Approved list of trees from Baltimore City Forestry Division](#)

## Have a Problem With Your Existing Street Tree? Call "311"

- Residents should never try to deal with a public tree problem on their own—even if it's in front of their home! They should call 311 and report the problem. Trees on private property, however, are the responsibility of the homeowner.

# Check Out the Baltimore City Tree Inventory!

- Curious to learn more about our current tree canopy? Baltimore City Department of Rec & Parks recently inventoried all of our street trees! Take a look at the regularly updated map at [www.treebaltimore.org](http://www.treebaltimore.org)

# Join the movement!

- Volunteer with your local greening group!
- Keep up to date on current legislation & reach your elected officials about environmental protections. Check out our Advocacy Alerts
- Join your local Forest Conservancy District Board (one in each MD County)
- Check out the Maryland Big Tree Program.
- Shop local & go native. Transform your own green space. Check out Herring Run Nursery
- Keep learning! Attend workshops and classes (TreeKeepers)

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