Environmental Column
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Protecting Our Urban Forest

There are many environmental and direct and indirect social benefits of urban trees, including cooler temperatures, cleaner air and water, reduced energy consumption, carbon sequestration, higher property values, increased business revenue, safer streets, heightened academic performance, and healthier and happier people.

Recognizing the benefits of our urban forest, Chapter 37 of the Davis Municipal Code protects and regulates 4 types of trees in Davis:

- Landmark Trees
- Trees of Significance
- Street Trees
- City Trees

A Landmark Tree is a tree that has been determined by resolution of the City Council to be of high importance because of its species, size, age, form, historical significance, or some other criterion.

A Tree of Significance is any tree, including those on private property, which measures 5 inches or more in diameter at breast height (4.5 feet above ground height). Trees on single-family properties are exempt from the Tree of Significance designation unless the designation of the tree is included as part of a development agreement, conditions of approval, etc.

A Street Tree is any tree that is planted and/or maintained by the City that is adjacent to a street or within a city easement or right-of-way on private property.

A City Tree is any tree, other than a Street Tree, planted or maintained by the City within a City easement, park, greenbelt, public place or property owned or leased by the City.

A Private Tree is any tree privately owned and growing on private property, which may include Landmark Trees and/or Trees of Significance.

The City of Davis has specific regulations in place to protect Landmark Trees, Trees of Significance, Street Trees and City Trees. The planting, pruning, or removal of any of these 4 protected tree types, or any modification of the surrounding areas around these trees, may require a permit or City review, depending on the nature of the proposed work. It is the responsibility of property owners to be aware of tree-related regulations before engaging in any activity that may impact existing trees.
The roots and canopies of trees do not mirror each other, in fact, tree roots can extend 2-3 times farther than the canopy above ground! This needs to be considered when looking to make changes to landscapes around city trees. Property owners are welcome to landscape over the root zone of their city tree, as long as the vegetation and materials used do not harm the tree. While the use of natural mulch, such as wood chips, around trees is encouraged to promote tree health, weed cloth and rock ground covers are discouraged around trees. Rocks and weed cloth impede air and water flow to tree roots and cause the soil to heat up—killing microorganisms in the soil and harming the tree. Tree roots over 2 inches in diameter may not be pruned without an inspection from a City Arborist to ensure that pruning the root will not cause harm to the tree. Altering the grading of the landscaping in such a way that would damage the tree is also prohibited.

To find out whether a particular tree is one of these four protected tree types, or for any other tree-related questions, please contact the Urban Forestry Division at 757-5633 or CityTrees@CityofDavis.org. Our City Arborists are happy to meet you on site to discuss any landscaping around City Trees and to ensure the trees are not threatened.

Thank you for helping us preserve and protect our urban forest! For more information on the City’s Urban Forestry program, please visit CityofDavis.org/City-Hall/Urban-Forestry.

**Compost and Mulch Giveaway Event**
On April 27, 2019 the City will be hosting a free compost and mulch giveaway event on Faraday Avenue off of 2nd Street.

The event will begin at 9 AM and will continue until 2 PM or until the compost and mulch are gone. This event is for Davis residents only; proof of residency will be required. Compost and mulch will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents must bring their own equipment (shovels, wheelbarrows, bins/buckets, etc.) to scoop and transport the compost and mulch. Vehicles will be asked to back up directly to the compost and mulch piles. No trailers allowed due to insufficient space.

**This event will be cancelled if there is rain forecasted--visit DavisRecycling.org the day before the event for confirmation.**

The wood chip mulch is being provided by our City’s Urban Forestry Division. When pruning City trees, Urban Forestry staff use a chipping machine to create a wood chip mulch from pruned limbs. This mulch is used in parks and greenbelts all around the City to suppress weeds, conserve water and promote healthy landscapes. The compost for the event is generously donated by the Napa Recycling & Composting Facility—the composting operation that receives and processes the organic material from Davis!