The City of Richmond has begun its Adopt-a-Tree Program to increase the number of trees in our city and to continue our city beautification project. Under this program, Richmond residents willing to adopt a tree in front of their homes can do so by calling the Parks and Landscaping Division at 231-3004. Residents must be willing to maintain the tree for the first 3 years. The City will maintain it thereafter.

In 1989 the City of Richmond developed the Urban Forest Management Program/Master Plan. A goal was identified to plant 500 trees per year with the ultimate goal of a public tree population of 50,000 trees. The City has planted 2,500 trees in the last three years, more than meeting the 1989 goal. These planting projects were funded by a combination of grants, money from the Mayor’s Golf Tournament, and City of Richmond funds.

BENEFITS OF TREES

Trees in the city satisfy a basic human desire to live among growing things. Trees soften noise, offer pleasant fragrances and provide an urban habitat for wildlife. They block wind, settle dust and smog particles, cast shade, release moisture and reduce reflected heat from buildings and pavement. They provide variety of color, form, texture and pattern, representing contact with nature amidst the hard surfaces of an urban landscape. People, by burning, oil, gas, coal, wood, and other fuels, add billions of tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere each year. Trees help to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it in their tissues. Trees also add substantially to property values. Planting a tree is a way of giving a gift to yourself, your city, and future generations.

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TREE SELECTION

Included in the Urban Forest Management Program/Master Plan is a list of recommended trees that would minimize sidewalk damage and that would be suitable for our City's environment. For a copy of this list call the Parks and Landscaping Division at 231-3004.

PLANTING

Proper planting techniques may mean the difference between a healthy, vigorous tree and one that perform poorly or dies. By observing the following recommendations, you will be giving your tree the best possible start in life.

Before you dig call 1-800-865-2468 to find out where utility lines may be buried. Call at least two days before digging.

Don't plant in wet, soggy soils. Trees need oxygen. Let the soil dry to a crumbly consistency before planting.

Plant the tree high. Plant the tree one to two inches higher than the surrounding soil. Don't worry about a few roots showing on the surface. If you have to dig deep to get through a hardpan or restricted layer, dig the hole and then refill it with the original loosened soil. Let it settle for a week or so. Then re-dig the hole and plant. Be sure not to plant the tree too deep. This may lead to crown rot and eventual death of the tree.

Dig the hole at least two times wider than the container or root ball. For barroot trees, make the hole wide enough to accommodate roots without bending them.

Roughen the sides of the hole to make it easier for the roots to penetrate. Check for twisted, circling or kinked roots. Cut and remove roots that wrap around or are broken or discolored. Refill the hole with the original soil. If a tree is to mature in the landscape, it will have to grow in the existing soil of the site. Soil amendments like peat moss, compost, rice hulls or fir bark are not necessary in most situations. To exclude air pockets, firm the soil around the roots as you fill the hole. Keep the trunk area free of soil.

To conserve water and control weeds, apply a 2 to 4 inch deep organic mulch around the tree. Don't use plastic mulches. They may hold in too much moisture and inhibit oxygen exchange, leading to root and trunk rot. Sometimes plastic mulches may not allow enough water to reach the roots stress the tree for moisture. To avoid crown rot, keep the mulch away from the trunk. Water the tree thoroughly after planting to settle the soil around the roots.

The Best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago.
The second best time is now.

ANONYMOUS
**STAKING**

When staking, use two stakes, one on each side of the root ball. Pound the stakes in deep enough so the stakes can’t move in the wind. Make the stakes as short as possible. To find the right height, move your hand up the tree trunk until the tree just remains upright. This is where to place the ties. Use two broad ties, of flexible material. Cut the stakes two to three inches above the ties. Injuries occur when the tree moves in the wind and rubs against stakes that are left too tall. Remove the stakes as soon as the tree will stand on its own. Most trees will not need staking beyond one year.

Not all trees require staking. In fact, improper staking may seriously weaken, deform or injure a tree. A tree left unstaked, with its top allowed to move in the wind, will develop a better root system, have greater trunk taper and thickness, and will have less wind resistance than a rigidly staked tree. Always remove the nursery stake. A tree tied to only one stake is subject to trunk and branch wounds, produces a smaller root system and blows over more readily when the stake is finally removed. If you need to stake a tree, do it correctly.

**WATERING**

Regular watering is vital. The number one cause of newly planted trees dying is no or irregular watering. Construct a basin around the tree, slightly larger than the root ball. Fill the basin once or twice a week during hot weather; less often if it is cool or it rains, making sure that the tree gets 5 gallons each time.

**FERTILIZING**

Mature trees usually do not require fertilizing as long as their leaf color and size is good. If needed, broadcast and water in a high nitrogen fertilizer according to rates given on the package. Use a good quality complete fertilizer as recommended for trees by your local nursery or garden center. Make the first application in late winter—before spring growth starts—and again in six weeks. Over-fertilizing can damage your plant, so follow package directions.

**PRUNING**

Correct pruning will help a tree develop proper structure, control its size, direct growth and maintain tree health. Improperly done pruning can seriously affect the health, safety, as well as the beauty of a tree. While pruning is important we recommend that you do not prune your new tree following planting. The City of Richmond will be responsible for the proper pruning of your tree.

NEVER CUT OFF THE TOP OF YOUR TREE! Cutting off the top of your tree will seriously damage its health. Some tree services advertise that they do topping, but don’t be fooled—it is a bad practice.

Obtaining Pruning permits. If you wish to prune your street tree you must obtain a permit from the Public Works Department by calling 251-3004. One of the requirements of the pruning permit is to have a licensed arborist do the pruning, preferably one certified by the International Society of Arboriculture.

Unpruned

Correctly pruned

Badly pruned (tapped)