



“Keys to Healthy Trees!”

Quality tree care is an overall program, a combination of horticultural and arboricultural practices. Following are what we consider to be the keys to healthy trees:

1. **Right tree in the right location.** If a tree is ill adapted to its location, no level of care will eliminate problems which will plague the tree over the years. Proper tree selection and appropriate site preparation are critical for a healthy tree.
2. **Good root flare.** The key to healthy trees is to ensure the root flare of the tree is properly exposed. An extremely high percentage of trees are planted too deep in the soil. If not corrected, a covered root flare can lead to many problems, impacting a tree’s long-term health and development. Special care should be taken to avoid plantings and adding excessive soil around bases of trees. **Ensuring the root flare is properly exposed and free of girdling roots is often the most proactive service that can be provided for a tree.**
3. **Proper watering.** We see many health problems related to over-watering. It is important to **avoid planting seasonal color, ferns** or other “high water need” plants around the bases of trees.
4. **Protect the roots from damage.** Roots grow very close to the surface. It is important to avoid or minimize trenching, digging or soil compaction within the root zone.
5. **Proper pruning.** Over-pruning can be very harmful to many trees. Deadwood, conflicting limbs, limbs rubbing the roof or interfering with walks or drives should be removed as they develop. Avoid over-pruning when removing green wood and leaves. Do not strip out the centers of your trees or be overly aggressive in thinning. Over-pruning harms many more trees than under pruning.
6. **Proactive services.** Fertilization, mulching, aeration and other proactive services can definitely help promote the health and longevity of trees.
7. **Periodic inspections and treatments.** Periodically, trees need to be inspected for problems. If problems are detected such as insects, diseases or structural weaknesses, appropriate actions may be needed before a minor problem becomes a major or incurable condition.

Trees are incredible creations and with proper care most can live for generations, becoming living legacies. There are many other detailed components of the above keys to healthy trees, but this outline provides you with a good overview of the basics of good tree care.