



## **Town of Montreal West**

### **Public tree planting**

## **TOWN TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

### **Frequently asked questions**

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The Town of Montreal West values the importance of public trees in the community for environmental, economic, health and aesthetic reasons and has determined proactive measures are required to protect and ensure the health of its urban forest and establish a robust urban forest for future generations.

We would like to answer some questions that may cross your mind about the Town's public tree planting activities.

#### **There are already plenty of trees on my street; why do I need one?**

You're correct that many of your current neighbours have beautiful mature trees. And right now those trees are keeping your street leafy and green; they're shading pedestrians, mitigating storm water damage, purifying the air, and reducing urban heat-island effect. Looking at them, you may feel you don't need a tree yourself. You may wonder what the issue is? You might even think there are enough trees already.

But in 50 years most of the trees you see now will be dead. If we don't continue to plant new trees every year, we will be leaving a barren landscape to future generations—resembling nothing like you see today. We need property owners, like you, who don't already have a mature street tree, to host a young one, so that 50 years from now we'll still earn the name "the garden suburb" which has attracted families here since 1897.

#### **What if I simply prefer an open lawn in front of my home? Isn't that my right?**

Of course the aesthetics of your front yard is largely up to you, but there is a strip of land in the public domain in front every home (about the first 6 to 8 feet). This land is used for the installation of public infrastructure, and this includes "green infrastructure" like street trees. While it may not be the way we're used to thinking about them, street trees are not unlike traditional infrastructure such as lamp posts, hydro poles, fire hydrants and traffic signs in that they play an essential role in providing a safe and healthy community. So while a homeowner may prefer not to have a lamp post, hydrant or tree in their yard, the



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Town deems these items essential to the quality of life in the neighbourhood and may choose to install them in any area of the public domain.

**I'm not comfortable with a large tree on my property because it might:**

- interfere with the hydro and telephone wires;
- break my pave uni, pipes or foundation;
- block the sun coming through my front windows;
- crowd out my current trees, flowers and landscaping.

You may have concerns about how adding a tree in front of your home may affect other aspects of your property. But please keep in mind that the tree that is planted this year will be extremely small (3-5 years old) and will take decades to reach maturity. It will not cast any significant shade on your home or over your current landscaping for 20 to 30 years (or even longer for some species).

Also, Public Works only selects locations and tree species that won't interfere with utility wires, water pipes or other infrastructure. They take great care in selecting appropriate and safe locations.

In fact, as the tree grows it can provide several benefits to your home like safeguarding it from stormwater, providing cleaner air in the immediate vicinity and reducing A/C costs.

**What if my lot's really small or I already have a hydro pole, lamp post or hydrant on it?**

Public Works surveys every single address in Town and evaluates the public domain in front of each property. The only lots earmarked for tree planting are those with sufficient space to host a mature tree. If your property is small or you have other infrastructure in front of your home, this is taken into consideration when choosing the tree location and species. Rest assured, the Town has no interest in planting a giant Silver Maple on a tiny lot.

**I'm worried I won't be able to maintain the tree and don't want to rake the leaves.**

Because all the trees planted on the public domain are Town trees, they are maintained by the Town (periodically pruned, treated for disease if necessary, and eventually felled if dangerous or dead). We appreciate it when residents help with watering a new tree, but the Public Works department also has a regular watering schedule to keep the tree healthy in the first year after planting.



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Other maintenance should be minimal. If raking is difficult, gardening experts recommend simply mowing over the leaves since they will act as mulch for your lawn. And remember, it will be several years before there are much of any leaves to rake at all.

#### **Why can't I choose any kind of tree I want and exactly where to plant it?**

You certainly have the choice of what and where to plant trees on over 90% of your property, but the public domain is the purview of the Town. We take the planting of street trees extremely seriously. All locations and species are carefully chosen. That said, we do give you a choice of 3 tree species to pick from, as we recognise your real interest in the selection.

You may want something slower growing or with a more modest canopy or with a certain aesthetic. It's in everyone's interest that you be pleased with the selection and that the tree becomes a cherished part of your property's character.

Study after study has shown that a street tree in front of your property may add tremendous value to your home and neighbourhood.

Source:

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Maria Torres: councillor responsible for Public Works, Public Buildings and the Environment