



## Info & FAQs for Tree Ambassadors

### General Program Information

- **Urban Resources Initiative (URI)** is a Yale University non-profit partnership - both a program of the Hixon Center for Urban Ecology at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, as well as a nonprofit guided by a local board of directors.
- **Program financing** - thanks to funding from the City of New Haven, grants, and private donations, URI is able to plant 500+ street trees every year with our GreenSkills crews.
- **Trees are free for residents** - URI plants trees free-of-charge for New Haven residents.
- **URI has a request-based model** - every tree that is planted has been requested by a New Haven resident who has agreed to water and maintain the tree for its first three growing seasons.

### Information for New Haven Tree Ambassadors & Tree Requestors

- **The goal for each Tree Ambassador is to identify 5+ tree requestors** in their neighborhood or ward every planting season.
- **Trees can be planted along any public city street** - in front of homes, businesses, houses of worship, community spaces - as long as there is someone committed to watering the tree.
- **Where can trees go?** New trees can go in existing tree pits, in new pits in the sidewalk (if space allows), in grass curb strips, or in front yards (if the tree site is within 10ft of the sidewalk and visible from the public right-of-way). No backyards.
- **Who is eligible for a tree?** Both owners and renters are eligible for trees! The space between the sidewalk and the street is public property, and the City of New Haven has granted URI a blanket permit to plant trees in this space. The majority of trees we plant are for renters! If the only space for the tree is in the front yard, we DO need permission from the owner in order to plant on their private property.
- **Watering and maintenance commitment** - in order to receive a free tree(s), tree adopters must commit to watering each new tree(s) for its first three growing seasons (25 gallons per tree every week) and inform URI of any problems with the new tree.
- **Once a tree requester has been identified:** Tree Ambassadors may submit information to URI about the tree requestors they have recruited in two different ways:
  - **Collect requestor contact information and share it with URI.** Here's what's needed for each tree requestor: name, address in New Haven, # of trees requested, phone, and email (if applicable).
  - **Encourage your neighbors to make their own tree request.** Make sure they mention they heard about the program from you!
    - *Phone:* 203-432-6189
    - *Email:* uri@yale.edu
    - *Online:* yalef.es/treerequest

- **Pre-planting site inspection** - After a tree request has been submitted, a URI tree expert will visit each potential planting site to identify the best location(s) for the new tree(s) to be planted and to make species recommendations. After the site visit, information about the inspection will be left at the front door.
- **Tree Selection** - URI plants many different types of trees every season to ensure that we have a diverse mix of trees throughout the city. URI will help each requestor select an appropriate species for their site, taking into consideration all of the parameters of the specific planting location (wires, utilities, proximity to buildings, sun exposure, etc) as well as availability. URI staff tries its best to accommodate specific requests, but cannot guarantee them. If the tree requestor has no species preference, URI is happy to make the selection for them.
- **Right Tree Right Place** - If the planting site *does not* have wires overhead, URI is required by the City to plant a medium or large-sized tree. These trees offer the greatest public benefit (longer-lived, soak up more stormwater, clean the air more, etc.). If the planting site *does* have wires overhead, URI is required to plant a small-size tree, so as to avoid extensive and dangerous pruning in the future.
- **URI Street Tree Catalog** - Tree requestors may find photographs of many of the trees that we plant by viewing our Street Tree Catalog:  
[https://uri.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/files/uritreecatalog-2017\\_final-lowres.pdf](https://uri.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/files/uritreecatalog-2017_final-lowres.pdf)
- **URI Guide to New Haven Street Trees** - Tree requestors may find more detailed information about the trees that we plant by viewing our Guide to New Haven Street Trees. The appendix includes a chart with the title, "Species Suitable for Planting," where requestors can identify trees appropriate for their preferences and specific site characteristics:  
[https://uri.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/files/uri-guidetonewhavenstreets-web\\_2.pdf](https://uri.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/files/uri-guidetonewhavenstreets-web_2.pdf)

## Planting FAQ's from Potential Tree Requesters

### **Can you plant a tree in my backyard too?**

Sorry, unfortunately we cannot! Because this is a public tree planting program that the city pays for, the trees have to be planted along the street or in the front yard where they benefit everybody!

### **Do you plant evergreens? Pine trees? Christmas trees?**

No, we do not plant those along the street, because the low branches can block sight lines.

### **Can you help me with the large/dead/sick tree?**

If the tree is in the street, you can make a request for the city to inspect it and determine the right treatment for it through their web forum, SeeClickFix.com. If it is in the yard, you will need the opinion of an arborist or tree care company.

### **I want a tree that doesn't make a mess.**

**Large trees:** honeylocust (least mess and maintenance... even the leaves degrade rapidly... no raking!), lacebark elm, zelkova, hardy rubber tree, ginkgo, katsuratree, blackgum  
NOT oak, maple, sweetgum (unless seedless), pagodatree, goldenrain tree, horsechestnut, buckeye, linden

**Small trees:** American hornbeam (best—inconspicuous flowers and seeds), small maple (such as hedge, trident, etc.), parrotia, Japanese tree lilac  
NOT crabapple, cherry, hawthorn

### **Do you plant fruit trees, like peaches or apples?**

Not exactly! We plant trees that produce fruits that the birds like, but not that have big fruits because the city doesn't want them making a mess along the sidewalk and on people's cars. But we DO plant a few trees that make delicious edible fruits:

**Large trees:** hackberry (also known as sugarberry because the small dark berry is sweet and delicious)

**Small trees:** serviceberry, Cornelian cherry dogwood

### **Will the roots get under the sidewalk or into my water lines?**

Small trees will rarely create these issues (although some cherries become wide enough at the base to affect sidewalks eventually). Large trees can affect sidewalks over time, especially if the curb strip is less than 4 feet wide. Water lines are usually not an issue unless there is a leak or crack in the pipe. Roots grow toward water, so they don't create problems with water lines—rather, they grow toward where there already is a problem in the line.

You can't guarantee that roots on large trees will not lift sidewalks or that their roots will not grow into pipes, but planting a slower growing tree can reduce the risk. Slow growers include: katsuratree, ginkgo, Kentucky coffeetree (for large curb strips), horsechestnut, hophornbeam