



Celebrate. Recognize. Protect.

Participation Guide for private property tree owners



Your tree is special...but you already know that.

That's why you or another Urbana resident nominated a tree on your property to be included in the City's Legacy Tree Program. Congratulations!

Participating in the program is voluntary. We know you have questions about what's involved, so here are the details.

Who administers the Legacy Tree Program?

The program was established in 2013 by the Urbana City Council according to City of Urbana Ordinance No. 2013-04-027, and is managed by the City Arborist in partnership with the Urbana Tree Commission.

What denotes a Legacy Tree?

A tree or group of trees can be designated a Legacy Tree by the Urbana Tree Commission if one or more of the following standards is met:

- **Size:** The tree is in the top one percent of tree sizes of its inventoried species in Urbana.
- **Rarity:** One of a kind tree due to species type, characteristic and/or a species of less than one percent of all inventoried trees in Urbana.
- **Historic or Notable Event:** There is a documented association with an historic event of 75 or more years ago and/or a more recent event of notable worth.
- **Age:** The tree is more than 100 years old, or a minimum of 75 years old when adjacent to a historically designated home.

- **Special Ecological Value:** The tree is shown to provide soil stabilization, an important genetic resource, or offers critical habitat for important plant or animal species.
- **Location:** The tree is considered of public value as a prominent visual focal point as viewed from public streets and right-of-ways.
- **Aesthetics:** The tree has a distinct or unusually appealing visual characteristic.
- **Illinois or National Register of Big Trees:** The tree is included in the Illinois or National register of Big Trees.

How will my participation in the program affect my tree and my property?

The following activities near the drip line area — which includes the space under the overall canopy of the tree — can create a detrimental environment for tree health. The best practice is to avoid the following activities:

- Parking under the tree canopy
- Gardening or other landscaping practices that require regular excavation of soil
- Cyclical chemical weed control
- Construction
- Changes in grade
- Installation of soil coverings or pavement

Is there a downside to my tree being designated as a Legacy Tree?

Creating public awareness about your special tree is generally a positive action



since our community's trees benefit everyone in Urbana.

Although the Legacy Tree Program does not carry with it a legal obligation for the property owner to follow public advice, it does create the opportunity for the public to speak their opinions about a Legacy Tree if the initial property owner or a future property owner seeks to remove the tree from the program. This session can elicit a broad spectrum of opinions, some of which could be quite different from your own perspectives.

Does the program offer benefits to owners of Legacy Trees?

Private property owners receive:

- Recognition in annual publication and on the City's Legacy Tree Walking Tour
- Free tree assessment and tree care advice from the City Arborist
- 5 yards of free mulch
- Recognition certificate
- Other potential benefits granted by the City of Urbana

Can I remove my Legacy Tree if it is unhealthy or in decline beyond repair?

- **The property owner may remove the tree** after a de-listing permit is issued by the City Arborist. The Legacy Tree

de-listing permit will be issued at no cost to the property owner within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the application for the de-listing permit.

- **If tree damage, decline and/or poor health** are not obvious, the application must include a certified arborist's recommendation for removal. Once a Legacy Tree de-listing permit is issued, the Legacy Tree will be removed from the City's database and other public records, as applicable.
- **If the Legacy Tree poses imminent and serious danger** to the property owner(s) or other persons and/or their property, the Legacy Tree may be removed prior to issuance of a Legacy Tree de-listing permit. No residents are exempt from the requirements to obtain any additional permits required by law.

Can I choose to remove a healthy Legacy Tree?

- **A property owner who wishes to pursue removal** of a tree from the Legacy Tree Program for reasons other than those stated in Section 12 of the Legacy Tree Ordinance (2013-04-027), may do so at his/her own discretion, following issuance of a Legacy Tree de-listing permit by the City Arborist. The City Arborist will not issue a Legacy Tree de-listing permit until 45 calendar days have passed following the property owner submission of an application for a de-listing permit.
- At the outset of the 45-day period, the City Arborist will post a sign on the

public right-of-way adjoining the property or the property on which the subject Legacy Tree is located. This posted sign will be visible from the public right-of-way and will remain posted for no less than 15 days and no more than 30 days prior to the next regular or special Urbana Tree Commission meeting at which any public comments on removal will be heard.

- **The required sign** will indicate that a Legacy Tree de-listing permit has been requested for the tree. In addition, the sign will indicate the telephone number of the Urbana Public Works Department, along with details on the next regular or special Urbana Tree Commission meeting, at which any public comments on the tree's removal will be heard. The sign should be removed no later than ten (10) calendar days after the completion of the Urbana Tree Commission meeting.
- **The Legacy Tree de-listing permit application** will be included as an item on the next Urbana Tree Commission meeting agenda. Any individual wishing to speak on the pending Legacy Tree de-listing permit application shall have the opportunity to do so during the public input section of the Urbana Tree Commission

meeting. All public comments received on the Legacy Tree de-listing permit application will be advisory for the applicant and the comments will be communicated in writing to the applicant by the City Arborist.

- **Following the 45-day period**, unless the applicant voluntarily withdraws the application for a Legacy Tree de-listing permit in writing, the City Arborist will issue the permit. Nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt any person from the requirements of obtaining any additional permits as are required by law regarding the tree.

How do I let the City know that I want to participate?

Private property owners must complete and sign the Legacy Tree Program's owner consent form to begin the process of having a tree evaluated by the City Arborist. Full details of the assessment criteria can be found online at www.urbanainillinois.us/legacytreetree and at the Urbana Public Works office.

Have other questions?

We appreciate your interest in the Legacy Tree Program, and encourage you to find out more by talking with City Arborist Mike Brunk.



Arbor Division

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