

PLANT, PROTECT AND PRESERVE FRIENDSWOOD TREES

By Kaye Corey, Master Gardener

Trees are a valuable asset in Friendswood. Keep Friendswood Beautiful gives away over 1500 trees to our citizens each year. But, how do we homeowners protect and preserve our trees once they are planted? Here are a few suggestions.

Driving or Parking on Your Lawn Under a Tree

Tree roots grow near the surface because like all plants they need air and water. When vehicles compact the soil beneath a tree, soil pore space is reduced. In addition, heavy vehicles can damage tree roots and kill trees.

Excessive Topsoil/Fill Around the Base of Trees

More than 90% of tree roots grow less than a foot below the ground. Too much fill around the base of a tree restricts their ability to use needed water and air. No more than 2 inches of fill should be added each year.

Using Excessive Mulch

Mulch is a good thing; the answer to all garden problems if used correctly. Mulch controls weeds, keeps the soil temperature right and holds moisture. Moderation is the secret to mulch use. Don't cover the natural flare of the tree trunk by piling mulch high against the trunk. The practice is often referred to as volcano mulching. This allows insects to bore into the tree and puts moisture against the tree trunk promoting disease.

Tree Trunk Damage with Trimmers and Mowers

We all like neat, weed free tree bases for a manicured lawn. However, the lifeline of the tree is cut when the layer just beneath the bark is damaged or cut. Possible preventive answers to this problem are to use trunk protectors, hardware cloth, mulch or use hand clippers.

Remove Trunk Wraps

Nursery trees are wrapped to protect trees during travel. Remove them immediately to prevent insects and disease organisms from thriving in a warm place, away from natural enemies.

Remove Guide Wires on Trees

We often forget to remove the guide wires on newly planted trees. Over time, they can cut into the tree causing damage and decline.

Trees are important to our landscape, our economy and our environment. We need to learn all we can to protect trees in our yards, neighborhood and community.

And, please remember to water your trees around the drip line during dry spells.