

Caring for Our Downtown Trees

Trees in our downtown areas grow under some tough conditions. Many are surrounded by concrete, lack good irrigation, endure air pollution and heat island effects and many have been damaged by construction. These trees need your help!

The City's Urban Forestry Division cares for the downtown area trees that reside in the public right-of-way (generally between the street and the building fronts). The Urban Forestry Division provides many basic services to the trees, however, we need your help, especially with providing water to the trees!

First, check to see if there is a working irrigation system. If not, make sure your trees are receiving adequate water. Either have inoperable irrigation systems fixed or secure another means of water either with a garden hose or with a water truck. Give the trees a good soaking once a week during the summer and fall and once a month during the winter and spring, generally 10 gallons of water per diameter inch of trunk measured at 1' off the ground. This simple act will go a long way to keep the downtown trees healthy and attractive.

Second, create healthy growing conditions. Do not pave or brick over planting pits. This only furthers the problem of restricted root zones and poor penetration of water. Do not dig or trench around trees as this damages root systems. Do not fill the inner-ring of tree grates with potting soil as this changes the grade at the root crown and causes decay to the trunk area that is supposed to be above ground. And, do not prune or lift trees to provide better visibility to your building. This disfigures trees and compromises their ability to make food and maintain good health.

Boulder's downtown trees make our shopping districts attractive and inviting. Healthy trees and landscaping have the potential to increase retail sales and make our downtown business district a thriving area.

For more tree care information, contact the Urban Forestry Division at (303) 441-4406, (7 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday) or visit us on the Web at: www.ci.boulder.co.us/parks-recreation and go to the Parks and Urban Forestry page.