Trees in Greenburgh

An Informational Session
presented by the
Department of Community Development and Conservation

Thomas Madden, AICP
Commissioner

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Introduction

- **We all know trees:**
  - Increase property values,
  - Remove carbon dioxide from the air,
  - Assist with stormwater uptake, and,
  - Beautify our neighborhoods

- **However:**
  - Trees can also have defects, which can cause personal injury or property damage.
  - The good news – most accidents are preventable.
  - Recognizing hazards and taking corrective action is the key

- This presentation presents guidelines, not absolute rules, for recognizing and correcting hazardous defects. When in doubt, consult a Certified Arborist.
Inspecting Tree Conditions

- Healthy Condition:
  - Full crowns, vigorous branches, full-sized leaves
- Examples:
  - Sugar maple
  - Eastern red cedar
  - American Sycamore
  - White Oak
Inspecting Tree Conditions

- **Poor Condition:**
  - Dead twigs and branches, small, off-color leaves, minimal growth

**Certain species prone to specific types of defects, diseases, exotic pests, etc. - N. Maple, Ash**
Hazardous Trees

Definition:

“A tree identified as structurally defective and likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, which could strike a target.”

What is a target?

- Vehicles,
- Buildings,
- Places where people gather
Hazardous Trees – What to Look for?

- **Dead Wood**
  - Dead trees/large dead branches - remove immediately.

- **Cracks**
  - A deep split through the bark, extending into the wood of the tree.

- **Weak Branch Union**
  - Are places where branches are not strongly attached to the tree.
Hazardous Trees – What to Look for?

- **Decay**
  - More prone to failure
  - Meer presence of decay does not indicate hazard
  - Evaluating the safety should be done by a certified arborist.

- **Cankers**
  - Cankers are caused by wounding or disease
Hazardous Trees – What to Look for?

- **Root Problems**
  - Girdling roots,
  - Soil mounding,
  - Twig dieback,
  - Dead wood in the crown,
  - Off-color or smaller than normal leaves

- **Poor Tree Architecture**
  - Growth pattern that indicates weakness or structural imbalance.
  - Trees with strange shapes are interesting to look at, but may be structurally defective.

Photos courtesy of Penn State Cooperative Extension
Caring for Trees

- **Tree Inspection**
  - At least once a year
  - Be sure to examine four characteristics of tree vigor:
    - new leaves or buds,
    - leaf size,
    - twig growth,
    - absence of crown dieback

- **Mulching**
  - Can reduce environmental stress
  - Mulch should be placed 2 to 4 inches deep
  - Mulch-free area of 1 to 2 inches wide at the base
Caring for Trees

- **Fertilization**
  - Improves growth
  - Reduces stress
  - Mature trees making satisfactory growth may not require fertilization

- **Pruning**
  - Improves tree structure
  - Enhances vigor and maintains safety
  - Pruning should always be performed sparingly
Caring for Trees

- **Removal**
  - Always a last resort
  - Removal is recommended when a tree;
    - Is dead, dying, or considered irreparably hazardous
    - Is causing an obstruction or is crowding and causing harm to other trees
    - Can be replaced by a more suitable specimen
Department of Community Development and Conservation

- Further information:
  - http://www.treesaregood.com
  - http://www.arborday.org

Remember, when in doubt, always contact a Certified Arborist to evaluate a tree or assess a tree problem.
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