

Planting, Maintenance, and Safety Guidelines

Planting

If you would like to add some of your own plants to your Street Stewards??? garden, choose your plants and their locations carefully. Remember that people walking and cycling, children playing, cars and trucks and underground utilities such as cable and telephone lines share your streets and sidewalks. Some things we ask you to keep in mind are:

- Visibility is of utmost importance. Tall plants can obscure the presence of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Therefore, in traffic circles, plants should be kept to a maximum height of 0.7 metres (2'4") and in corner bulges, plants should be kept to a maximum height of 1.0 metre (3'3"). Plants can be kept in check by pruning or preferably, by using plants that will mature to this height.
- Drivers need to be able to see small children before they cross the street. For added visibility, keep plants lower near the curb or traffic circle rim. Plants should be a maximum of 0.3 metres (1') high for a distance of 0.3 metres (1') from the back of the curb or traffic circle rim.
- Keep plants 1.2 metres (4") away from fire hydrants. In an emergency, fire fighters need to be able to quickly see and access these hydrants.
- Keep plants and soil clear of utility covers (manhole and valve covers). Utilities that provide you with water, power and telephone service are located under the street and work crews need to be able to see and access them. A pot of flowers on top of a utility cover is fine as long as it is easily movable by one person. Occasionally crews must do maintenance work on these utilities and they may have to disturb your street garden.
- Keep the sidewalk and street clear of plants to ensure they are not a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Working Around Street Trees

When gardening around traffic circle trees please be aware of the following:

- Take care not to cut any roots or branches
- Keep soil or compost from contacting the bark. The root collar and trunk are made up of cells that are not specialized to resist constant soil moisture. Placing mulch or soil against the root collar and trunk can interfere with the tree's life-sustaining processes and could ultimately affect its health.
- Do not place more than 10 cm (4") of soil or compost directly above tree roots. Excessive mulch retains surface water which promotes shallow rooting of trees. Deep rooted trees will survive drought stress more readily and are less susceptible to wind damage.
- Soil or compost used around tree roots should be of a sandy texture (at least 50% sand by volume) to encourage good drainage.

- Do not nail or tie signs, trellises or other fixtures to a street tree.

Maintenance

Street gardens need to be weeded, watered and occasionally mulched, just as home gardens do. Unlike your home garden, street gardens are next to pavement that stores heat during the day and gives it off at night. This creates a hot, dry environment for your plants. There are often great demands placed on the city water supply during the warm summer months. Therefore, the City encourages waterwise gardening. By conserving water, we can ensure that fresh water will continue to flow well into the future. For further information about waterwise gardening, call ?????. To help make maintenance of your street garden an easier task, consider some of the following suggestions:

- Use plants that are low maintenance and adapted to, or tolerant of, dry conditions. This will reduce the amount of maintenance and watering your street garden will need. The Street Stewards Program has developed a [list of low maintenance, drought resistant plants](#).
- Use compost as a mulch to reduce the drying effects of evaporation. Compost is also a valuable and nutritious soil amendment.
- Keep the garden clean, tidy and weeded. Weeds compete for soil nutrients and can contribute negatively to the health of your ornamental plants.
- Garden trimmings can be added to your home compost or set out at the curbside on your yard trimmings pick up day.
- The use of pesticides to solve plant problems is discouraged. Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to deal with plant health problems. Integrated Pest Management is a strategy to prevent and suppress pests with minimum impact on human health, the environment and non-target organisms. Good gardening practices are the foundation of IPM; healthy, strong plants are more resistant to pests and disease. For further information about IPM contact Evergreen???
- You may choose to add your favourite plants to your street garden to provide colour and interest throughout the year. Keep their maintenance requirements in mind. Up to 25% of the gardening area is available for new plant and flower additions.

Safety

Since traffic circles are next to or in the middle of the street, gardeners should pay special attention to passing bicycles and vehicles when working in their gardens. Some things to consider are:

- Make yourself visible! Wear a safety vest or other bright clothing when gardening in your street garden. The Street Stewards Program will provide you with a safety vest if you would like one. Call the Street Stewards Program Coordinator.
- Always be alert to approaching vehicles especially when working in traffic circles.

- Do your street gardening when traffic is quiet rather than at peak traffic hours. Your experience will be safer and more enjoyable.
- Garden only during daylight hours and when the weather provides clear visibility.
- Make sure that children are closely supervised if they are helping in your street garden. It is not recommended that children help with traffic circle gardens.
- Keep tools off the street.
- Don't leave hoses unattended as they can be a hazard to pedestrians and cyclists.

Application to participate in Street Gardening

If you have read the above information and are ready to participate, please fill out the attached waiver.