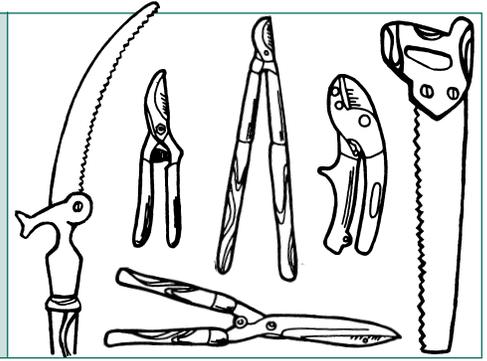


Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry

Annual Work Plans for Tree Commissions



Municipal tree commissions have so much work to do every year that routine tree care can easily be overlooked. An annual work plan can ensure that public trees receive the regular care they need to remain attractive, healthy, and safe. A plan will help you identify and prioritize important tasks, schedule work, assign responsibility, reduce liability, and even build support for a tree program. In addition, using an annual plan to document the maintenance needs of trees in your community will show administrators that annual tree maintenance is warranted and has been carefully planned.

To create a work schedule, your tree commission will need to identify tasks that must be done each year, decide when they should be done, and assign personnel to the tasks. Use the example on the back of this fact sheet as a guide. Each section of the form is explained below.

1. Planning and Administration
Generally, tree commissions organize and prioritize their work each January.

2. Tree Planting
Decrease long-term costs and increase long-term enjoyment by selecting trees and locations carefully. Use a street tree inventory and an annual field survey to identify available planting sites and develop annual tree planting plans. Place

orders for trees several months before tree planting dates. In other words, plan fall plantings in the spring and spring plantings in the summer.

3. Tree Pruning
Develop a schedule or rotation so that all trees are pruned once every five years. Young trees properly pruned in their first three to five years will develop a strong branch structure and require less work as they mature. Always remove dead and hazardous limbs immediately.

4. Tree Removal
Keep your trees safe and protect your community from injury and property damage by evaluating the health and structure of all public trees at least once a year. Trees identified as dead or dying should be removed promptly, and hazardous trees must be removed immediately. Check potentially hazardous trees frequently and keep written records of tree conditions at the time of inspection.

5. Public Relations and Funding
In addition to caring for public trees, you should build community support for funding by keeping administrators informed of program plans and activities and involving residents whenever possible. This support should help ensure ongoing tree care and may enable you to expand your program.

6. Other Tasks

Consider using a system such as Plant Health Care to monitor and plan for insect and disease problems.

Identify tasks in each of the categories above and create a form like the example provided. Then use the form to schedule completion of the tasks during the appropriate season.

- Prune in late summer or fall, or during the dormant season.
- Plant during spring or fall. (Some species should be planted only in the spring.)
- Evaluate tree hazards each summer.
- Remove hazardous trees as soon as they are discovered.
- Evaluate and prioritize tree planting opportunities in the summer.
- Water newly planted trees during hot weather and periods of little rain.
- Prune young trees after the first year.
- Conduct crew training during the winter.

On a separate page, add details about dates, people, and equipment needed to accomplish the work.

By planning ahead, you can ensure that your community forest receives proper care all yearlong.

Annual Work Schedule for Community Trees (Each dot in chart below = one week/month. Circle dot(s) to show when work will be done.)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Example: Work to be done first two weeks of May.	◉
1. Planning and administration												
a. prioritize work to be done
b. organize activities
2. Tree planting												
a. survey potential planting sites
b. decide locations, species, and cultivars
c. notify adjacent property owners
d. announce and hold public hearing
e. order trees
f. inspect and tag trees in nursery
g. receive, inspect, and store trees
h. plant trees, prune, stake, and water
i. water trees periodically
3. Tree pruning												
a. survey trees, decide which to prune
b. arrange for crew, equipment, and supplies, or arrange for service contract
c. supervise pruning and disposal of wastes
4. Tree removal												
a. survey trees, decide on removals
b. notify adjacent property owners
c. announce and hold public hearings
d. arrange for crew, equipment, and supplies, or arrange for service contract
e. supervise removals
f. grind stumps, reseed
5. Public relations and funding												
a. report to municipal officials
b. prepare news releases
c. arrange news and TV coverage of events
d. submit Tree City USA application
e. submit grant applications
f. develop education programs
g. hold Arbor Day ceremony
h. conduct youth education
6. Other tasks												
a. water trees during drought
b. fertilize deficient trees
c. control diseases and insects, as needed
d. collect leaves and recycle
e. clean up storm breakage
f. conduct training, professional development
g. train tree workers

This fact sheet was prepared by Penn State with guidance from the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council and support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) Bureau of Forestry. For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program, School of Forest Resources, The Pennsylvania State University, 108 Ferguson, University Park, PA 16802; (814) 863-7941.

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