



Arlington Adopt-A-Tree Program

The Town of Arlington is seeking help to support our street trees and to maintain a healthy, vibrant urban forest. The primary goal of the Adopt-A-Tree program is to help newly-planted street trees in Arlington get established and thrive. Caring for a tree during its establishment period (2-3 years) increases the likelihood of its survival. The Adopt-A-Tree program lets you search for a street tree near you (your home, business, etc.) and commit to keeping it healthy by watering and tending to it.


One of the biggest challenges the town faces in increasing town tree planting is effective tree watering. Volunteering to adopt a street tree is a wonderful way to serve the community.

Tree Adoption Expectations

Adopting a tree comes with specific expectations. By signing up to adopt a tree, you agree to:

- Water the tree 1-2 times per week from June-October. Water can be brought to the tree using various containers (milk jugs, watering cans, etc.) or by coordinating with a nearby resident to use their hose
- Take photos of your adopted street tree with your smartphone at first watering visit and again in October (preferably before leaves fall)
- Find someone to care for your tree if you are away during a portion of the summer watering period (just like you would with an adopted pet)
- Follow written guidelines for watering - and [view self-help watering video](#)
- Record your watering visits to your adopted tree, using your smartphone

How to Start

1. Visit our interactive [Adopt-A-Tree map](#) to select one of the young trees (trees planted from Spring 2018 through Fall 2019)
2. Pan and zoom the map to your neighborhood/ location and view Available trees
3. Click the Adopt-A-Tree button , then click on an Available Tree, then fill out the Adopt-A-Tree form.



How to water your tree:

In most situations, new street trees are installed with watering bags (aka Gator Bags) that provide slow release water to the tree. If no watering bag is provided, placing water at the base of a tree is also a sufficient method. Water slowly until the water is being absorbed into the soil at the base of the tree. Once the soil is moist, it becomes easier for the water to be absorbed. Be careful not to let the water run off the site that you are watering.

- **Where to get water:** Hoses and water sources are not always readily available near the tree. In that case, bring water from home in vessels with lids such as empty plastic milk jugs, soda bottles, watering cans, or buckets. Ask neighbors or friends if they can help provide vessels for this volunteer effort. While 10-15 gallons of water per week is best for new trees, some water is better than no water.
- **Filling a watering bag:** This can be done by hose or using another vessel. The bag should not be filled at the top, but instead using the small slot in the bag that is usually under the flap. You know you're putting the water in the correct place when you do not see the water immediately flood out of the bag. The bags are designed to be slow release. As you're putting water in the bag, you can give a gentle tap to the bag with your foot to make sure that the water is coming out of the small holes at the base of the bag. Sometimes these small holes get clogged with soil. If the bag is full for more than one day, the holes are most likely clogged and should be cleared.
- **Watering frequency:** May-November, but if a week must be missed, you can find someone else to cover for you or even miss a week without long term damage to the tree. The watering frequency goes up during July-September when weather is particularly hot and dry.
- **Rain impact:** Remember, even heavy rains don't necessarily penetrate far enough into soil to sufficiently water a new tree. Adopted trees should be watered weekly regardless of weather.

Baby tree



Bag flap



Gator Bag



Additional Guidelines

On your initial visit:

1. Name your tree. If you want, you can come up with a name for your tree and write the name on the yellow ribbon using a sharpie
2. If it appears that your tree has weeds at the base, you can place a small amount of mulch to protect the tree trunk from mowers. Never let mulch go directly up against a trunk or it can eventually cause rot. Mulch can also help the tree absorb water by preventing runoff.
3. Water tree. Record your watering visits [at the tree map where you signed up for your tree](#)
4. Take a photograph of your tree and [upload it to the Tree Map](#)
5. Set up a watering reminder so you remember to return for future watering visits (we recommend setting an alarm or alert on your smartphone)

Subsequent visits:

1. Water tree 1-2 times per week (more often in hotter and drier weeks)
2. Record visit at [at the tree map where you signed up for your tree](#)
(www.mapsonline.net/arlingtonma/adoptatree.html)
3. Feel free to share photos of you and/or your tree on social media. Just remember to tag your post with #AmazingArlingtonTrees
4. Report any damage or concerns to the Arlington Tree Warden at: ArlTreeCmte@gmail.com
5. Encourage a friend, family member, neighbor to adopt a tree!

Thank you for your help in taking care of Arlington's trees!

