

Mechanicsburg Borough



Shade Tree Commission

Rules & Regulations
36 West Allen Street
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717) 691-3310 ext 126

The Mechanicsburg Borough is lucky to have an established Shade Tree Commission dedicated to the health and welfare of the Borough's abundant assortment of trees throughout the neighborhood. The responsibilities of the Shade Tree Commission are plentiful and imperative. The Commission has exclusive control of the shade trees in the Borough, as defined by Ordinance No. 1071. Specifically, the Shade Tree Commission is authorized to issue a permit to plant, transplant, remove, maintain and protect all trees in the tree lawns that line our streets. The Commission is also authorized to recommend to Borough Council rules and regulations for the location, planting, transplanting, removal, replacement, care and protection of the shade trees of the Borough. More detailed information regarding the Shade Tree Commission and its responsibilities can be found in Section 1-425 of Ordinance No. 1071.

Shade Trees are defined as large trees with dense, widespread canopies located in the tree lawn between the curb and sidewalk. A shade tree will often exceed twenty-five to thirty feet in height at maturity. Commonly used shade trees are oaks, maples, ashes, and elms. Shade trees are an investment to both property owners and to the Borough as they offer several benefits to the community.

Many people would only consider the aesthetic purpose of a shade tree - they are pleasant to look at and provide color and beauty to the streets of Mechanicsburg. However, a healthy collection of shade trees will contribute far more than visually appealing scenery.

If you have questions regarding shade trees in the Mechanicsburg Borough, please feel free to contact Erin with the Shade Tree Commission at (717) 691-3310 extension 105. You may also direct questions to the Mechanicsburg Borough Office at 717-691-3310.



The area between the sidewalk and street is called a Tree Lawn.

Did you know...?

In one year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the amount of carbon dioxide produced when you drive your car 26,000 miles.

Benefits of Shade Trees to the Borough:

The Borough is consistently promoting shade trees because they improve the health of local streams and waterways by reducing storm water runoff and erosion.

Trees also:

-  Improve air quality by removing small pollutant particulates (i.e. sulfur dioxide, ozone, etc.).
-  Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by taking up carbon dioxide.
-  Create a habitat for plants and birds.
-  Mitigate the urban heat-island effect by shading our homes and streets.

Benefits of Shade Trees to the Homeowner

Shade trees require minimal maintenance and provide many advantages for the homeowner.

Specifically, shade trees:

-  Decrease heating bills up to 10-15% and cooling bills up to 20-50%.
-  Increase property value 10-20%.
-  Improve health by reducing stress, asthma and sun-causing skin cancer.
-  Reduce crime – a 2001 national study showed apartment buildings with trees and vegetation, had over 50% fewer total crimes than non-landscaped buildings.
-  Provide privacy by muffling the sound from traffic, lawn mowers, and/or loud neighbors.

A shade tree can:

- Reduce heating and cooling costs both indoors and out. By reducing electricity usage energy costs could be reduced by 25 percent.
- Drop the summer temperatures under their canopies by up to 10 degrees.
- Reduce heat reflected from paved areas.
- Attract and sustain wildlife.
- Convert carbon dioxide to oxygen.
- Help prevent soil erosion.
- Increase your property value.
- Provide leaves for compost.

List of Planting Conditions and Approved Shade Trees

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

Developed by
Mechanicsburg Shade Tree Commission
Mechanicsburg Environmental Advisory Council

Information drawn from:

Landscape Tree Factsheets, Henry D. Gerhold, Norman L. Lacasse and Willet N. Wandell, Pennsylvania State University School of Forest Resources;
Treevitalize Tree Species List, May 2008, Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources

List of Conditions for Plantings

- A. Small, Compact Trees – Condition A
 - a. Narrow tree lawns or planting strip is at least 2 feet wide, and typically less than 4 feet wide
 - b. Holes cut in sidewalks should be at least 3 feet x 3 feet
 - c. Utility lines run overhead, between 25 – 45 feet above ground
 - d. Building facade setback is less than 10 feet from the center of the tree

- B. Medium-sized Trees – Condition B
 - a. Tree lawn or planting strip is at least 4 feet wide (or greater)
 - b. Holes cut in sidewalks should be at least 4 feet x 4 feet
 - c. Utility lines are at least 45 feet above ground, or are absent
 - d. Building facade setback is 10 feet or greater from the center of the tree

- C. Large Trees – Condition C
 - a. Tree lawn or planting strip is at least 6 feet wide (or greater)
 - b. Holes cut in sidewalks should be at least 6 feet x 6 feet
 - c. Utility lines are at least 45 feet above ground, or are absent
 - d. Lawns and pocket parks in which tree planting space is > 70 feet wide
 - e. Municipal parks and school properties with ample open, unobstructed space to plant trees (planting space is at least 70 feet wide, preferably 100 feet wide)

Planting conditions are considered hierarchical. If a tree is acceptable to plant within Condition A, it is also acceptable for planting within Condition B or C. However, consideration should be given for the creation of canopy and shade within the borough. Larger trees are preferred in conditions where they will thrive. The Shade Tree Commission recognizes that while the detailed planting conditions will cover much of the conditions in the borough, there may be unique situations that require flexibility. This may particularly be the case for issues of overhead utility lines. The Shade Tree Commission reserves the right to modify these planting conditions and tree species list (on a case-by-case basis) to achieve the goal of improving the street tree network within the Borough of Mechanicsburg.



Autumn Brilliance Serviceberries are known for their vivacious fall coloring.

List of Appropriate Trees for Specific Planting Conditions

This list represents two items of interest to residents, property owners and business owners within the Borough of Mechanicsburg. First, this is the **approved list** of planting conditions and tree species for planting **within the tree lawns and planting strips** that lie between the sidewalk and street for properties within the Borough of Mechanicsburg. Any applicant interested in planting a tree within their tree lawn or planting strip must first measure their tree lawn/planting strip and identify whether there are utility lines present. Once the planting condition has been identified, the applicant should check the corresponding list of trees below and select a tree from the appropriate condition list. A permit for planting a tree is required from the Borough of Mechanicsburg, as well as the use of a root barrier to ensure protection of the sidewalk and street from upheaval.

For example: John Applebaum is interested in planting a tree in the three-foot planting strip that lies between his sidewalk and the street curb. In looking above the planting strip he notices that there is a bank of electrical lines about 30 feet above the strip. Considering the planting conditions that he faces, Mr. Applebaum checks the “Condition A” list for an appropriate species. He has heard that the “Autumn Brilliance” Serviceberry is an appropriate tree as long as it has been pruned early in the nursery to ensure that it has a single-trunk form, and he checks with borough staff at the Borough of Mechanicsburg’s office for the necessary permit to plant his Serviceberry. While at the borough, Mr. Applebaum discovers that he should also plant his new tree with a root barrier to help ensure that the trees roots do not push up his sidewalk in the future (saving him expensive repairs!) With permit in hand, Mr. Applebaum travels to his local nursery, picks out his new “Autumn Brilliance” Serviceberry, and heads home to plant.

In addition to the use of this list for street tree permitting and planting, this list is a suggestion for appropriate planting within property owner’s lawns, especially front lawns where a tree can create canopy for the street. In addition, many of the larger trees identified below are excellent candidates for planting in public spaces – school property and borough parks. Borough staff and members of the Mechanicsburg Shade Tree Commission and Environmental Advisory Council are happy to provide advice to property owners on the appropriate use of this list.

Small, Compact Trees – Condition A

The mature height of these trees is less than 30 feet. These trees are appropriate for planting under or near power lines or other places where space is limited, such as tree lawns that are 2 feet to less than 4 feet wide. Little pruning will be required to assure public safety and reliable utility service. However, many of these trees do require early pruning (usually at the nursery) to create a single-trunk tree form. These trees also have other desirable attributes, such as durability, beauty, and low maintenance.

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Variety</i>
Canadian Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Autumn Sunset (single-trunk tree form)
Canadian Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Cumulus (single-trunk tree form)
Canadian Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	White Pillar (single-trunk tree form)
Allegheny Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Cumulus (single-trunk tree form)
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i>	Autumn Brilliance (single-trunk tree form)
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i>	Trazam (single-trunk tree form)
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i>	Cole's Select (single-trunk tree form)
Galaxy Magnolia	<i>Magnolia sp.</i>	Galaxy Tree Form
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Adirondack
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Ballerina
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Donald Wyman
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Pink Dawn
Sargent Cherry	<i>Prunus sargentii</i>	Columnaris
Japanese Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i>	Amanogawa (single-trunk tree form)
Japanese Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i>	Accolade
Japanese Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i>	Autumnalis
Japanese Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i>	Kwanzan
Japanese Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata</i>	Okame
Common Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Schubert
Snow Goose Cherry	<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Snow Goose



Japanese Flowering Cherry Trees are beautiful with vibrant, colorful blossoms.

Medium-sized Trees – Condition B

The mature height of these trees is 30 to 45 feet. They may not be compatible with utility lines, unless wires are high enough (at least 45 feet above ground) or the tree is far enough away from the lines. Tree lawns should be at least 4 feet wide (or greater) for these trees so that there is ample space for the mature trunk and crown.

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Variety</i>
Hedge Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Evelyn
Hedge Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Miyabe
Red Horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	Briotti
Red Horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus x carnea</i>	Fort McNair
Heritage River Birch	<i>Betula nigra</i>	Heritage (single-trunk tree form)
Upright European Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Fastigiata
American Hornbeam, Musclewood	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	
Carolina Silverbell	<i>Halesia carolina</i>	
Sweetbay Magnolia	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	
Sourwood	<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	
Hophornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	
Japanese Tree Lilac	<i>Syringa reticulata</i>	Ivory Silk

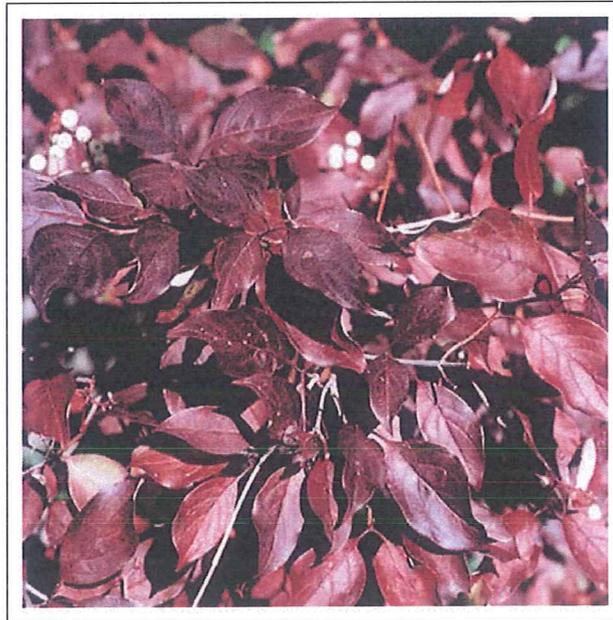


*Hedge Maples are tall and wide.
They are commonly used as shade trees because of their dense grouping of leaves.*

Small and Medium-sized Trees with Spreading Growth Form

Due to their spreading growth form, these trees are **not appropriate** for planting strips and tree lawns. They are excellent trees for lawns and pocket parks.

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Variety</i>
Eastern Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	
Alternate Leaved Dogwood	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	
Flowering Dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	
Kousa Dogwood	<i>Cornus kousa</i>	
Grey Dogwood	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Cuyzam (single-trunk tree form)
Grey Dogwood	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Ottzam (single-trunk tree form)
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus Viridis</i>	Winter King
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Adams
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Harvest Gold
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Prairiefire
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Red Bud
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Sugar Tyme
Crabapple	<i>Malus sp.</i>	Strawberry Parfait



Grey Dogwood Trees produce a dark, cherry-colored leaf during the fall months.

Large Trees – Condition C

The mature height of these trees is greater than 45 feet; therefore these trees should not be planted near most power lines. These trees should be spaced 35 to 50 feet from power lines, buildings, and other trees. These trees could be planted in tree lawns that are 6 feet wide (or greater) where ample space exists for growth of the crown, trunk, and roots. Parks and large lawns are other spaces in which planting these trees should be encouraged.

<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Variety</i>
Black Maple	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Armstrong
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Franksred
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	October Glory
Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red Sunset
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Gold Mountain
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Goldspire
American Chestnut	<i>Castanea dentata</i>	only blight-resistant hybrids
Common Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	
Katsura-tree	<i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>	
Thornless Honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis</i>	Only thornless cultivars like Shademaster or Majestic
Kentucky Coffeetree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	
Tuliptree, Yellow-poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	
Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	
Cucumber Magnolia	<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	
Dawn Redwood	<i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i>	
Black Tupelo, Black Gum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	
London Plane-tree	<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	Bloodgood
American Sycamore	<i>Platanus Occidentalis</i>	
White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>	
Swamp White Oak	<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	
Scarlet Oak	<i>Quercus coccinea</i>	
Northern Pin Oak	<i>Quercus ellipsoidalis</i>	
Shingle Oak	<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	
Pin Oak	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	
Willow Oak	<i>Quercus phellos</i>	
English Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Attention
English Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Skymaster
English Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Skyrocket
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	
Shumard Oak	<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	
American Linden, Basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i>	
Littleleaf Linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Corinthian
Littleleaf Linden	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Chancellor
American Elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i>	only cultivars resistant to Dutch Elm Disease
Japanese Zelkova	<i>Zelkova serrata</i>	Green Vase
Japanese Zelkova	<i>Zelkova serrata</i>	Village Green



Invasive Tree Species

These trees are considered invasive species by the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources and/or the US Department of Transportation. These trees are not native to Pennsylvania and are known to spread uncontrollably into natural areas. Seeds from trees planted in the borough are carried by animals, wind, and rain into our state’s forests, parks, nature preserves, and natural areas. When invasive trees spread into these natural areas, they threaten the native plants and animals that are our state’s natural heritage and reduce our state’s biodiversity. Once established and spreading in our natural areas, these invasive species are very difficult, sometimes impossible, to control. Therefore, **borough residents are discouraged from planting these trees** in order to protect our state’s natural heritage and biodiversity.

Information drawn from
 Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/wildplant/invasivelist.aspx>
 US Department of Transportation (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rdsduse/pa.htm>)

Common Name	Scientific Name
Amur Maple	<i>Acer ginnala</i>
Norway maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
Sycamore maple	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Tree-of-heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Mimosa	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>
Goldenrain tree	<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>
Melaleuca	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>
Chinaberry Tree	<i>Melia azedarach</i>
Princess Tree	<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>
Callery Pear	<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>
Chinese Tallow Tree	<i>Sapium sebiferum</i>
Siberian Elm	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OF THE BOROUGH OF MECHANICSBURG APPROVING THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF RULES, REGULATIONS, FEES AND PENALTIES
GOVERNING SHADE TREES IN THE BOROUGH**

RESOLUTION NO. 01-2010

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Mechanicsburg has identified the importance of natural resources – including the expansion of the existing street tree network – through the adopted 2007 Borough of Mechanicsburg Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, Goal Six the 2007 comprehensive plan states: the Borough of Mechanicsburg shall “embrace and enhance the community’s natural resources as ecological, recreational and civic amenities for local and regional users;” and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Mechanicsburg has heretofore enacted Chapter 1[Administration and Government] and Chapter 25 [Trees] of the Code of Ordinances of the Borough of Mechanicsburg (herein, Code); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to said Chapters, a Shade Tree Commission is established and empowered to exercise certain jurisdiction over shade trees, as that term is defined in Chapter 25; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 1-425 of Chapter 1 and Section 25-104 of Chapter 25, the Shade Tree Commission, upon approval of the Borough Council, is empowered to adopt rules, regulations, fees and civil penalties for the administration of provisions relating to shade trees; and

WHEREAS, the Shade Tree Commission has duly considered the matter and has determined to impose the following rules, regulations, fees and civil penalties concerning shade trees within its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, after due consideration, the Borough Council has determined to approve the rules, regulations, fees and civil penalties hereinafter specified.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it duly resolved by the Shade Tree Commission of the Borough of Mechanicsburg that the following provisions be adopted, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Borough Council that the same shall be approved:

Rules and Regulations Governing the Planting of Shade Trees

1. Whenever a new shade tree is planted within ten (10') feet of a curb, public sidewalk, or non-curbed street, a root barrier of a type approved by the Commission shall be installed.
2. Trees to be planted shall not be less than one (1") inch caliber at a point six (6") inches above the ground, symmetrical in shape with a clean trunk.
3. The planting of any species other than those identified on the approved list on file in the Office of the Borough Secretary is prohibited. In addition, specific planting conditions are identified in association with specific tree species. The planting of tree species will conform to the set of approved planting conditions on file in the Office of the Borough Secretary. The Mechanicsburg Shade Tree Commission reserves the right to permit additional species (or within different conditions) on a case-by-case basis.
4. No shade tree shall be planted less than thirty (30') feet, from an intersection of two streets, whether curbed or non-curbed, measured from the right-of-way line of the intersecting streets, or less than eight (8') feet from a fire hydrant, sewer inlet, light standard, utility pole, or underground utilities (as defined as sewer, gas or water lines.) These spacing restrictions may be modified at the discretion of the Commission.

6. Where trees are to be planted in existing pavement, a space at least three (3') feet by three (3') feet shall be provided for each tree. For the information of the applicant, a planting space of five (5') by (5') would be preferred. Each tree shall be planted with a root barrier. The opening shall be level with the sidewalk and covered with an appropriate material to reduce the spread of weeds (e.g. tanbark, mulch or grating.) Exceptions may be granted in certain specific instances at the discretion of the Commission.
7. In order to prevent damage to underground facilities, and protect residents, Act 287 of 1974, as amended, requires contact with the Pennsylvania One Call System prior to breaking any ground. Anyone considering planting a tree – either within the planting strip/tree lawn or within a property owner’s lawn, must call Pa One Call to ensure the location of the tree does not damage underground gas, water or sewer facilities. Applicants should contact the Borough of Mechanicsburg for information on the PA One Call System.

Permit and Hearing Fees

The following fees shall be paid for permits:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | For the planting of each tree: | No Charge |
| 2. | For the pruning of each tree: | No Charge |
| 3. | For the removal of each tree: | No Charge |
| 4. | For a formal hearing before
the Shade Tree Commission appealing
Their decision: | \$100 (may be waived in whole or in part by
the Council, in its discretion) |

Civil Penalties

The following civil penalties may be imposed by the Commission upon each person, whether owner or actor or both, for each violation of the provisions of Chapter 25 of the Code. These penalties shall be considered independent of, and in addition to, any penalties imposed by a magisterial district judge for conviction of summary offenses brought under the provisions of Section 25-108(6) of Chapter 25 of the Code. Civil penalties may be imposed concurrently for each specific violation and may be imposed for each day of violation. As set forth in Chapter 25 of the Code, civil penalties may be certified to Borough Council to be assessed as a lien against the affected property.

1. For failing to obtain a required permit:
Not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$100.00.
2. For planting a tree in violation of any provision of the Code:
Not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$100.00.
3. For pruning a tree in violation of any provision of the Code:
Not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$100.00.
4. For removing a tree in violation of any provision of the Code:
Not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$600.00.
5. For violating any order of the Commission:
Not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$600.00.
6. For violation of any other provision of the Code:
Not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$600.00.

