

Brownsboro Village Tree Care Standards

Appendix to Ordinance Number 24-5

Preserving and increasing our tree canopy is a major goal for Brownsboro Village. Trees cool neighborhoods, add value to our homes and neighborhood, promote outdoor activities and social interaction, provide homes for birds and animals, absorb excess rain, decrease air pollution, and promote heart and overall health. As our trees age and storms increase, Brownsboro Village is losing trees quicker than we are replacing them.

Brownsboro Village is a neighborhood where respecting each other is embraced, and collaboration is valued. Our goal is to be proactive to ensure a healthy tree canopy and protect our property values.

These Standards for Tree Care have been developed to provide guidance when:

Concerned about the health of a tree Planting a Tree Removing a Tree

The standards are the same for trees on private property and public spaces. Tree preservation and maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner. **The Tree Board places a special emphasis on monitoring trees in the public right of way.**

Establishing a Village Arborist

In November 2023, Brownsboro Village selected Caroline Westfall as our ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Arborist to advise residents about the health of their trees, when considering planting a tree, or removing a tree. We urge homeowners to take advantage of her FREE consultation services (provided through December 2025) by contacting Caroline directly at davidwst@bellsouth.com or Phone: 502-643-3080.

A. Signs of a potentially unhealthy or diseased tree:

Vertical or horizontal cracking bark. Fewer leaves. Dead limbs in multiple branches.

Mushrooms or fungus growing around the lower part of the trunk. Insect infestation.

Indented open wounds (cankers). Hollow areas Dry wilting leaves Fewer flowers, stems, or buds. The tree is visibly leaning.

B. Basic guidelines for planting a tree.

1. The expected height of a mature tree is measured in three categories: under 25 feet, 25-50 feet, and 50 feet and over. Be sure to take this into consideration when selecting a species.

2. Consider the presence of overhead utility wires. Only plant trees that will not exceed 25 feet under overhead utility wires. Plant taller trees at least 10-20 feet laterally from overhead utility wires depending on the expected crown shape, height, and homeowners' willingness to prune to not interfere with overhead wires.

3. Consider the potential root system of the species of trees, and if the roots will break up your existing driveway, sidewalks, and sewer system; or result in surface roots.
4. Consider underground utilities and irrigation systems. Call 811 (also known as DIG) before planting a tree. 811 (DIG) is a free Kentucky service that marks underground utilities before digging on private property.

The purpose of contacting 811 (DIG) is so that underground utilities will not be hit, and the home and neighborhood will be kept safe.

5. **Newly planted trees need 1-2 inches of water per week.** The best way to water is with a soaker hose or tree watering ring. The ring will slowly let water drip into the soil, which will encourage root growth into the surrounding area.

Keep the soil moist but not soaked. Water your tree at least once a week unless we've had a soaking rain, or when the water ring is empty. When the soil is dry beneath the surface of the mulch it is time to water.

Continue to water regularly until the ground freezes (i.e. a screwdriver cannot penetrate soil). No watering is necessary then.

Repeat this watering schedule throughout the year.

C. Basic guidelines for removing or pruning a tree.

1. All homeowners are strongly encouraged to take advantage of Brownsboro Village's free arborist consultation before removing or heavily pruning a mature tree. *Topping a tree is **never** recommended.*
2. Criteria for tree removal or heavy pruning include:
Disease. Injury. Structurally unsound. Interferes with utility service.
Creates unsafe vision clearance or danger. Threat to property.
Located in an area where a structure or improvement will be imminently placed.
3. If a tree is removed the stump shall be taken down to ground level and the debris pile removed within 3 months.
4. Independently, or at the request of the mayor, the Tree Board may initiate a conversation with property owners whose trees meet the criteria for tree removal or pruning as defined in Line 2 above. With the property owner's cooperation, the Brownsboro Village arborist will be asked to assess the concern and follow up with a written report to the homeowner and Tree Board. If the tree is on private property, the Tree Board will work with the homeowner to find a resolution. The final decision regarding action will lie with the homeowner.
5. If a tree is in the right of way and posing an issue as defined in Line 2 above, the Tree Board, guided by the arborist's consultation and recommendations, will work with the homeowner to assure that action is taken to remove or reduce the concern.

D. Tips for maintaining Brownsboro Village Tree Canopy

1. Vines on trees obscure potential problems. To remove them, cut the vines at the base of the tree trunk, but do not manually remove them. Allow the vine to die (and loosen) over time.

2. Mulching: **Keep your tree mulched.** Mulch acts like a blanket to hold moisture in the soil, moderates soil temperatures, protects the trunk from mower or weed eater injury, prevents soil compaction, and reduces competition for nutrients from grass and weeds.

Maintain a 2-4" layer of mulch extending 1-2 feet out from the tree trunk. But avoid piling the mulch up around the trunk of the tree. Mammoth piles of mulch referred to as "mulch volcanoes" keep bark constantly moist and foster decay.

3. **Watering:** Mature trees need one inch of water weekly year-round.

4. Ideally, plant a new tree 5-10 years prior to the anticipated removal of a mature aging tree.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.

The second-best time is now.

~ Chinese Proverb

Approved: Sept 2023 Updated: December 2024

Effectiveness of arborist usage to be reviewed: December 2025