Property Owner's Guide to Protecting Parkway Trees

The trees that line the streets of Costa Mesa are an environmental, aesthetic and valuable asset to our community. Without our street trees, the City could not be recognized as a "Tree City USA" City. While the City tends to the pruning of parkway trees, we depend on the partnership of residents and business owners to help with the health and beauty of trees in the parkways. We hope that you will take a couple of minutes to read the information below and share this information with your gardener, so we can continue to provide a well managed urban forest for future generations to come.

- **Do not allow mowing equipment or string trimmers to damage trees.** The conductive system of a tree is located just below the bark. When tree trunks are damaged, the ability of the tree to move water, nutrients and starch becomes limited. Trees with wounded trunks often experience limb die-back or whole tree decline. Wounds are often infected by tree diseases. Use care when working near trees.

- **Keep the area around the tree trunks mulched.** There should never be grass or flowers planted around the trunk of a tree. Planting flowers or other plants near the trunk of a tree encourages root wounding. Wounded roots are prime entry sites for tree diseases. Application of a 3-inch layer of wood chips or bark mulch around trees protects trees from injury by lawn mowing equipment while providing a nice aesthetic touch.

- **Provide a good environment for tree roots to grow.** Trees growing in grass lawns are competing with the grass for water and nutrients. When trees receive water only from the sprinkler system that waters grass, the trees are prone to developing surface roots that can become a problem for sidewalks and driveways. Shallow rooted trees are less tolerant to drought. Trees need deep watering. Let the hose drip around your trees once a week during the heat of summer, once a month during winter months. Adjust your sprinklers so that they do not spray and erode the bark of trees.

- **Aerate the lawn around trees two times per year.** Grass growing under the canopy of a tree can limit the amount of oxygen available to the roots of the tree. Tree roots need air to absorb water and nutrients. Aerating your lawn is good for the grass and provides oxygen for tree roots. Use care when working near surface roots with an aerator. After aerating, top-dress the lawn with a ¼" layer of fine textured organic mulch. This topdressing will promote the healthy soil micro-flora that trees depend on to absorb water and nutrients and to fend off diseases and stress.

The City of Costa Mesa thanks you for partnering with us in our quest to provide a healthy and well managed urban forest. If you have any questions about trees, need information about protecting trees during construction, or need to report a tree problem, **contact the Maintenance Services Division at (714) 754-5123.**