

UPPER MONTCLAIR BASIN

STORMWATER SYSTEMS STUDY



TREE LAWN MODIFICATIONS CAN SUPPORT LOCAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

In addition to making improvements to your personal property to assist with neighborhood stormwater management (building a rain garden, utilizing rain barrels, proper groundcover, etc.), modifications can be made to the tree lawn in front of your house to further support local stormwater management. Thoughtful design and planting can direct runoff from your property and/or sidewalk to the tree lawn adjacent to your property so that trees, vegetation and soils can help with filtration and treatment.



CITY STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW)

Property owners in Denver are responsible for the proper maintenance of landscape areas in the public right-of-way fronting their properties. This includes the area typically considered the “tree lawn,” the area between the sidewalk and the curb. Maintenance includes mowing, weeding, cleaning, snow shoveling, raking, re-seeding, and otherwise repairing all the landscape and paving materials in the ROW, including sidewalks and street trees.

Denver’s *Streetscape Design Manual* includes guidelines for all improvements that are made to the public right-of-way, including the tree lawn. These guidelines are not all-inclusive nor will they meet every condition however design efforts should strive to meet the intent of the guidelines.

Continue reading for some of the key recommendations and resources for managing your tree lawn:

STREET TREES

Trees in the right of way, considered street trees, should be selected so that the species match the overall character of the street. Denver has an approved street tree list for public right-of-way (a link is provided on the following page). When selecting species and location, it is important to consider the mature size of the tree. When planting trees near street corners, sight triangles must be considered for safety purposes and are determined by the posted speed limit of the street and size of the mature tree. (Specific guidance for sight triangles can be found in the *Streetscape Design Manual*). In order to provide adequate room for healthy tree root systems, an ideal size for tree lawns is 8 feet wide or more.



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FURTHER TREE RESOURCES

Denver's Office of the City Forester works hard to protect Denver's tree canopy and has a number of resources available for residents to help with tree selection, placement, and care. Key resources include:

- Approved Street Tree List for Denver's Public Right-of-Way: http://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/747/documents/forestry/Street_tree_guide.pdf (Note: There is a column in the tree species list labeled "Water Quality Area." Trees with an "x" in this column are trees that are good at improving water quality).
- Apply for a free tree! Learn more at: <http://beasmartash.org/what-can-i-do/apply-for-a-tree/>
- Learn how much water trees on your property can manage using the iTree-Design tool: <https://design.itreetools.org/>
- Any questions or concerns related to street tree planting can be sent to: forestry@denvergov.org

GROUNDCOVER

To assist with local stormwater management, permeable groundcover is strongly encouraged in the tree lawn area. Irrigation, sun exposure and maintenance are important considerations when selecting groundcover. Preferred groundcovers should be low (less than 18 inches high), should require minimal maintenance and should be drought resistant. The *Streetscape Design Manual* provides a list of recommended groundcovers including himalayn border jewel, moneywort, wooly thyme, periwinkle, prostrate junipers, and wintercreeper. For residents interested in growing turfgrass, the *Streetscape Design Manual* recommends alternatives to bluegrass and suggests contacting the Colorado State University Extension Turfgrass Specialist (csuturf.colorostate.edu) for an updated list of recommended varieties. The *Streetscape Design Manual* does not allow for gravel, tree bark, wood chips, loose stones, or other non-organic materials be used as permanent groundcover in tree lawns. Mulches are recommended initially as plant material is established to control weeds and conserve moisture.



XERISCAPE RESOURCES FROM DENVER WATER

Denver Water provides a number of resources to assist with water conservative landscaping. While the goals of this type of landscaping are slightly different than landscaping aimed at capturing and treating stormwater, key principles such as proper planning, design and siting of vegetation, amending soil so that it can better store water, and efficient irrigation align with the goals of stormwater management.

Water Wise Landscape Handbook: http://www.denverwater.org/docs/assets/6E5CC278-0B7C-1088-758683A48CE8624D/Water_Wise_Landscape_Handbook.pdf