



Town
of
Ridgefield
Connecticut

FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Fall, 2003
Revised Edition

Ridgefield Tree Warden: John Pinchbeck

Ridgefield Tree Committee:

David Andry
Nancy J. Boersma
Joseph Eltz
Priscilla Holmes
Will Molyneux
Tom Venus
Norma Williams

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 1
Section I: Management Plan Background	Page 2
Section II: Tree Warden's Responsibilities	Page 4
Section III: Required Tree Permit	Page 6
Section IV: Standards for Tree Protection and Care at Construction Sites on Town Property	Page 8
Section V: Standards for Planting Trees on Town Property	Page 13
Section VI: Maintenance Practices for Trees on Town Property	Page 16
Bibliography	Page 17
Appendices	
A: <i>Town of Ridgefield Tree Ordinance</i>	Page 19
B: Useful Websites and Telephone Numbers	Page 26

Introduction

“No village in America can show a more beautiful thoroughfare than Main Street, which extends through the center of Ridgefield. . . . it is lined on each side with an unbroken row of noble trees – graceful, sweeping elms that meet in an archway overhead; giant sycamores and sugar-maples that make a canopy of flame when the frosts of October have touched the leaves.”

- from Ridgefield, a Brief Historical Notice of the Town, circa 1903

This century-old legacy remains the inspiration and motivation for the high standards and expectations established in this Forestry Management Plan, mandated by the Town of Ridgefield Tree Ordinance and developed and maintained for the Town by the Tree Warden and the Tree Committee.

The Tree Committee’s mission statement reflects the benefits to the community of continuing this legacy:

“The Ridgefield Town Tree Committee’s mission is to encourage the town to commit community effort and resources to preserving and improving our trees and greenscape. Our goal is to establish and maintain an optimum, stable, and safe public tree and plant environment, thereby enhancing Ridgefield’s historic character: esthetic, natural, and economic.”

This Forestry Management Plan serves these goals by listing the responsibilities of the Tree Warden, many of which are mandated by Connecticut state statutes; by outlining the requirements for obtaining a permit to do tree work on town property; by setting standards for tree protection at town-owned construction sites; by establishing standards for planting public trees; and by outlining maintenance standards and practices. Any work involving trees and shrubs on town property must follow these standards.

Ultimately, adherence to these standards and procedures by all town officials and agencies, commercial enterprises, and private citizens is crucial if we are to retain and enhance the natural beauty of our town. The Tree Warden and the Tree Committee will gladly assist in achieving these goals.

This Forestry Management Plan, therefore, provides a resource for all who are committed, as we are, to maintaining the historic legacy of Ridgefield’s “noble trees.”

The Tree Committee
The Tree Warden

Section I: Management Plan Background

The town “forest” under the care of the Tree Warden and the Ridgefield Tree Committee and subject to this Forestry Management Plan consists of the trees and shrubs on town-owned land, including the easements (public roadside land) along the more than 200 miles of streets and roads in the Town of Ridgefield. Estimates are that more than 40,000 public trees line Town roadways.

Though not technically responsible for the existing trees along the state roads within the town, the Tree Warden works very closely with the state in caring for these trees, and is responsible, with the advice of the Tree Committee, for planting new trees on state roads when needed. The Tree Warden works constantly with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Conservation Commission in managing the trees in parks, on school properties, and on public open space land.

Reducing hazards posed by public trees is a prime responsibility of the Tree Warden. Every year in Connecticut, falling limbs and trees injure or kill people, damage property, and cause dangerous power outages. The Tree Warden and the Tree Committee are keenly aware of this challenge and take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of life and property, while working to maintain the beauty of Ridgefield’s tree-lined roads and public landscapes.

The Tree Committee, now consisting of seven citizens, was established in 1996, when the Ridgefield Tree Ordinance was first approved by the Board of Selectmen; the Committee works with the Tree Warden in an advisory capacity. The Committee has actively sought to expand its knowledge about trees, to use that knowledge in supporting the Tree Warden, and to share that knowledge with the community. Reviewing the planting plans for public construction projects, solving tree issues that arise, and presenting educational programs are some of the Committee’s activities. In the mid-1990’s, an inventory of trees in the center of Ridgefield was undertaken. The Tree Warden and the Committee have continued to use that inventory as well as to consider developing other types of tree inventories to increase effectiveness in managing Ridgefield’s public trees and shrubs.

In addition, a Notable Tree program is maintained by the Committee. Both locally-chosen trees and trees designated by the Connecticut Botanical Society are included on this list. The Notable Tree program, school activities, and informative articles are all part of the ongoing effort to educate the community concerning this important town resource.

The requirement that a permit be obtained by everyone who seeks to work on public trees is a crucial part of the effort to protect and maintain Ridgefield's public forest. This requirement is outlined in Section III of this plan.

The Tree Warden and the Tree Committee are committed to preserving and improving our public forest, and all of our efforts, including this Forestry Management Plan, we consider to be "works in progress."

Section II: Tree Warden's Responsibilities

The following responsibilities of the Tree Warden are derived primarily from the Connecticut General Statutes, Title 23, Sections 58 to 65; Title 16, Sections 233 and 234; Title 13a, Section 140; and from the Ridgefield Tree Ordinance, Section 15-1 to 8 in the Ridgefield Code.

- 1) Enforce all provisions of law for the preservation of trees and shrubs on town property.
- 2) Develop and administer a forestry management plan for the town.
- 3) Inventory and monitor public trees, as well as private trees which may impact the public, in an effort to maintain tree health and reduce hazards.
- 4) Hire and supervise contractors in the pruning, maintenance, planting, or removal of trees or shrubs on town property under his jurisdiction in accordance with the specifications and standards outlined in the Forestry Management Plan.
- 5) Post a notice upon trees on town property of their planned removal at least ten (10) days before removal is to take place, unless the condition of the trees constitutes an immediate public hazard. Objections to removal may be appealed to the Tree Warden, who will schedule, if needed, a public meeting.
- 6) Issue permits requiring adherence to the regulations of the Forestry Management Plan to any parties working on town property and affecting public trees and shrubs in any way.
- 7) Prevent damage to trees and shrubs on town property by any person, company, utility, or state or federal agency. Damage may include but not be limited to: pruning, removing, defacing, cutting, painting, or marking trees; posting unauthorized signs on trees; injuring, mutilating, killing or destroying any trees or shrubs; permitting any toxic chemical including excessive road salt or other deicing chemical to seep, drain or be emptied on or about any tree; piling soil over roots to a suffocating depth or scraping soil above the roots; setting fires or burying rubble within the trees' root zones.

- 8) Review and coordinate with utility company representatives the pruning and removal of town trees and shrubs along the utility companies' rights-of-way. Issue to the utilities periodically or yearly a blanket permit for their activities, in adherence with state regulations and with stipulations deemed necessary by the Tree Warden. If, as a result of such work, trees are irreparably damaged, the Tree Warden shall require the company to pay for replacing the trees with a similar species. Respond to citizens' inquiries and complaints in relation to this tree pruning and removal.
- 9) Note and deal with any violations of pertinent state statutes or the Ridgefield Tree Ordinance, and assess penalties required or deemed appropriate according to law.
- 10) Select and identify any trees which qualify as "landmark trees" and "notable trees" on town property and, with the concurrence of the property owner, on private property.

Section III: Required Tree Permit

The Ridgefield Tree Ordinance (Section 15 of the Ridgefield Code), revised and approved in 2001, requires any person working with or around trees and shrubs located on Town property to obtain a permit.

Section 15-6, "Permits," of the Ridgefield Code reads as follows:

No person other than the Tree Warden may perform any of the following acts without first obtaining from the Warden a permit for which no fee shall be charged, and nothing in this Section shall be construed to exempt any person from the requirements of obtaining any additional permits as are required by Law:

- 1. Plant trees or shrubs of any size on Town property or remove or otherwise disturb any tree located on Town property or rights-of-way.**
- 2. Attach any rope, wire, nail, sign, poster, or any other man-made object to any tree or shrub located on Town property or rights-of-way.**
- 3. Dig a tunnel or a trench, move or store construction vehicles, materials, or equipment, or change the grade within a tree's root zone on Town property or rights-of-way.**

The following page is a copy of the "Permit for Tree Work on Town Property."

**PERMIT FOR TREE WORK
ON TOWN PROPERTY**

(Required by the Ridgefield Tree Ordinance, Sects. 15-6, 15-8)

PERMIT # _____	ISSUE DATE _____
----------------	------------------

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____ PHONE # _____

APPLICANT'S ADDRESS: _____

CONTRACTOR/ARBORIST: _____ ARBORIST
LICENSE # _____

LOCATION OF WORK (specify street & nearest house # or other means to adequately locate):

TYPE OF WORK REQUESTED (Including selection, planting, pruning, transplanting and maintenance) Use the back of sheet or attach drawings, if necessary.

Applicant Signature _____ Date

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. Applicant assumes all responsibility for property damages or personal liability. The Contractor / Arborist shall supply a copy of Certificate of Insurance for a minimum amount of one million dollars (\$1,000,000).
2. Planting of trees shall require Permittee / Contractor to contact Call Before You Dig 1-800-922-4455. Trees shall be planted in accordance with the Ridgefield Forestry Management Plan guidelines.
3. Trees and shrubs to be planted in Town right-of-way shall not obstruct sight line of vehicular traffic.

OFFICE USE ONLY		
TREE POSTED _____		
APPROVED _____	DENIED _____	DATE _____
REASON: _____		
SIGNATURE _____		
JOHN PINCHBECK, TREE WARDEN		

Section IV: Standards for Tree Protection and Care at Construction Sites on Town Property

To ensure tree vigor and longevity, it is essential to protect both the above-ground and underground portions of a tree when a site will be disturbed by construction. While damage to the above-ground portions of a tree is often obvious and more easily assessed, damage to the root system, while not obvious, is likely to have serious long-term effects on the vigor, appearance, and ultimately, the survival of a tree.

The construction process poses particular threats to trees. Damage to the trunk or branches, or improper pruning of a tree increases the possibility of insect damage, disease, and decay which could kill the tree. Improper or excessive pruning necessitated by damage incurred during construction can destroy the aesthetic value of trees and can also make them unstable and more susceptible to wind damage.

The impact of construction on the below-ground root zone of trees can be significant. Roots absorb water, oxygen, and nutrients for growth, and are generally located in the top 12 inches of the soil, extending out several times the distance of the tree canopy. Some experts compare the relation of a tree to its root system as that of a wine glass placed on a platter. The bowl of the wine glass represents the tree's canopy; the stem of the glass, the trunk of the tree; and the platter, the shallow root zone extending out far beyond the canopy.

Most damage to trees from construction activity is the result of root zone stress. This stress can be caused by raising or lowering the grade, trenching or excavation, compaction of soil caused by heavy equipment traveling or being stored near trees, or the storage or disposal of chemicals or other construction materials within the root zone. These are the most typical construction practices that damage and kill trees.

Deciding which trees on a construction site can be saved, which should be removed, and which need protection is a crucial first step in the design process and should be done well before construction starts. If considerable clearing is to occur on a site, it is desirable to save as many healthy trees as possible to maintain a high quality growing environment and the visual character of the site. An understanding of the relative value of tree species and the condition of the trees to be saved can result in a healthier, longer-lived tree population on the site. Transplanting trees is an option for saving healthy trees that are located within the construction zone. However, the cost of moving a tree must be weighed against the condition of the tree and the likelihood of its surviving the stress of transplantation.

The Tree Warden is a certified arborist and will help with these decisions, and the Tree Warden and Tree Committee are committed to working with designers, landscape architects, construction crews, and all town agencies involved for a successful construction project.

The submission of an application for a **Permit for Tree Work** (see Section III, pages 6 and 7) will start the review process with the Tree Warden. Because each tree has developed and grown on its own unique site, and because each project is unique, the effects of proposed disturbance must be assessed on an individual basis. The early involvement of the Tree Warden and Tree Committee during the design phase of any project on town property, well before construction starts, will make it easier to solve potential problems and allow the project to move forward expeditiously.

The installation of appropriate tree protection at the beginning of the construction phase will prevent damage to trees. The following guidelines for tree protection have been developed using several sources noted in the Bibliography. Because they represent state-of-the-art methods and may be more rigorous than those commonly used, the Tree Warden must be contacted early in the process so that the requirements will be clear to everyone from the beginning.

In addition to the tree protection measures described here, at all times the best horticultural practices must be followed on a construction site. This includes the following situations which may be permitted with the authorization of the Tree Warden: the cutting of tree roots only with clean cuts, to protect the tree from rot and disease; covering a part of the root zone that must be exposed to the air for over a day with soil, mulch, or damp burlap; backfilling any disturbed areas as soon as possible and replacing the soil in the root zone at the same level as before the disturbance; and keeping the tree flair at the base of the tree free of soil and mulch.

If the Tree Warden determines that trees have been damaged due to the contractor's failure to follow guidelines, the Tree Warden shall require the contractor to remove the damaged tree and to replace and install a tree of suitable species and size.

After the submission of the application and drawings, the Tree Warden will visit the site to review the site conditions. Based on the submitted drawings, the limit of construction will be determined and clearly marked on the drawings, if it has not already been determined. The trees to be protected and the extent of the Protected Root Zone of any trees to be impacted will also be clearly marked on the drawing. The minimum area for the protected root zone will be the area within the drip line of the tree canopy. However, whenever possible, it is desirable for this area to extend to a maximum of two to three times the diameter

of the crown of the tree, which more closely matches the extent of the root system.

The best methods for protecting the trees in this zone will be determined at this time by the Tree Warden based on the site conditions and work to be done. In most cases the methods illustrated in the Typical Tree Protection Detail, page 11, will be sufficient. If the traveling of equipment or the storage of materials must occur within the root zone, protection must be installed to prevent compaction and to protect the tree trunk as illustrated on page 12, Typical Tree Trunk Armoring and Tree Root Protection Detail. Any other requirements to protect trees such as tunneling under roots or the use of an air spade rather than the construction of a trench using a backhoe or other typical equipment that damages roots will be shown on the construction drawings submitted with the application.

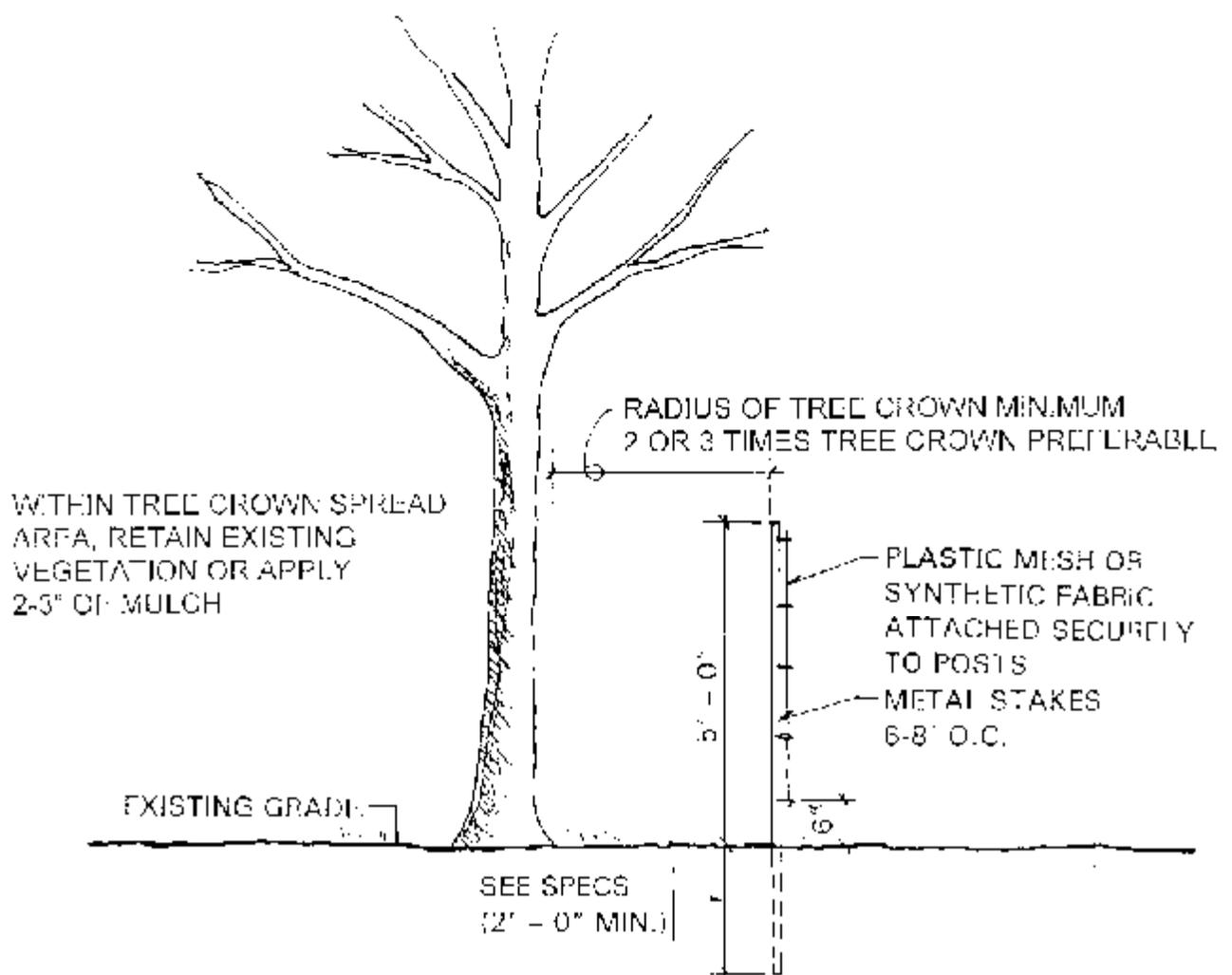
The annotations by the Tree Warden are part of the Permit and must be included as part of the construction drawing package.

Before construction begins, the Tree Warden will inspect the installation of the tree protection measures to insure that they meet requirements.

If unforeseen conditions make it necessary to remove or alter the tree protection devices, the Tree Warden should be contacted immediately and an additional application for a Permit for Tree Work must be submitted explaining the situation. The Tree Warden will respond as quickly as possible to avoid delays.

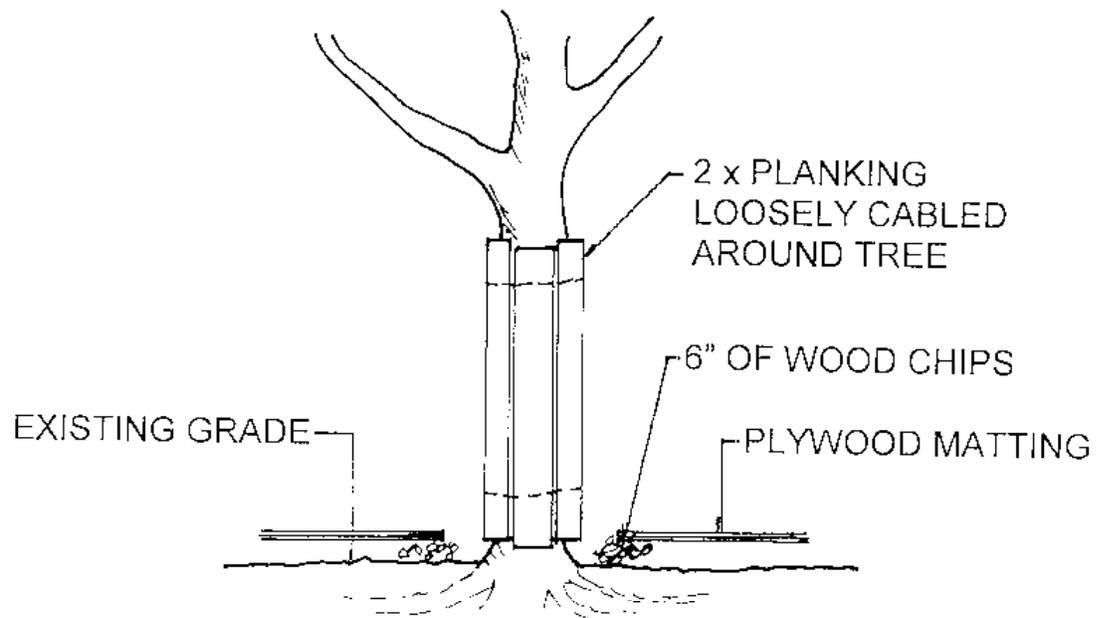
All protection devices must be removed by the contractor when construction is complete. The Tree Warden will inspect the area and trees for any damage. Trees stressed by construction may require special attention such as irrigation, fertilization, pruning, or pest control.

In the event of irreparable damage to any tree including the trunk, branches, or root system, the Tree Warden may, at his discretion, as stated in the Ridgefield Tree Ordinance, require those responsible to pay for structural repair, including pruning, cabling, bracing, bark tracing, fertilization, soil aeration, or irrigation or to pay for the replacement of the damaged tree with a suitable substitute.



Note: This barrier is intended to keep construction equipment, personnel and materials from compacting the soil around tree roots and damaging the trunk or limbs of the tree.

Typical Tree Protection Detail



Note: This protection is to be used when circumstances do not allow Typical Tree Protection (see detail, page 11). Install 6" of wood chips and use plywood matting over wood chips in areas where equipment must operate. Protect trunk with planking to reduce scarring by equipment. Remove planking, matting and mulch as soon as operations are finished.

Typical Tree Trunk Armoring and Tree Root Protection Detail

Section V: Standards for Planting Trees on Town Property

A healthy, beautiful population of trees depends on proper selection and planting. A large financial and time investment is represented in the tree plantings in town, and our best efforts are needed to insure a successful planting project. The goal of the Tree Warden and the Tree Committee is to have trees that reach maturity – a long-term investment.

The majority of problems with trees originate below-ground; therefore, careful selection and planting must be a top priority. This involves understanding and evaluating the site, including the soil conditions, utility restrictions, site use, exposure, and design considerations among many other issues. Much research has been done in recent years on these issues, and the Tree Warden and Tree Committee have become familiar with the latest guidelines. Especially recommended is Bassuk, Marranca, and Neal's *Urban Trees: Site Assessment, Selection for Stress Tolerance, Planting*, which is listed in the Bibliography; copies are available at the Ridgefield Public Library.

Once the decision is made to plant, it is imperative to plant the tree properly. Each situation brings different problems and solutions. However, for the majority of work on town property, the Typical Tree Planting Detail on page 15 should be used to insure the proper planting of trees. At the time the Permit for Tree Work – in this case, for tree planting – is reviewed by the Tree Warden, any special site conditions will be reviewed, and changes to the detail will be made as necessary to insure the long-term health of the tree. These might include soil tests, the use of structural soil, or additional drainage structures. The detail agreed upon at the time of permitting should be used on all planting plans and should be included in all construction drawings, specifications, and bidding packages for work on town property.

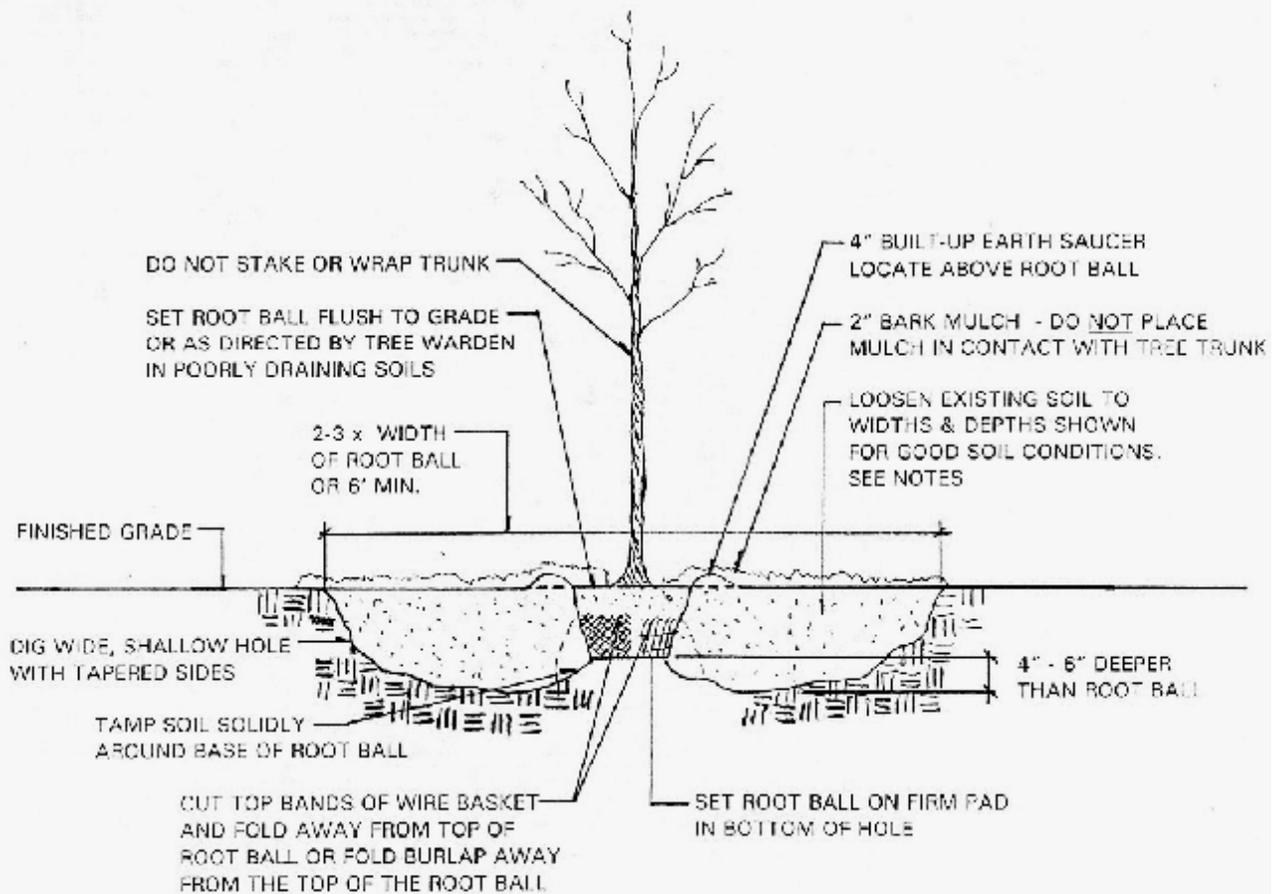
The early involvement of the Tree Warden and Tree Committee in a project will avoid the necessity of rework and other problems later on. It is also imperative that contractors be aware of the Ridgefield Typical Planting Detail when they are developing a bid proposal so that appropriate costs will be factored into the estimate. The Tree Warden will insure that trees are installed in this manner, and work will not be accepted unless the contractor follows the methods and materials specified on the agreed-upon planting detail.

Summary of procedures for planting a tree on town property

- 1. Applicant submits application for Permit for Tree Work to Tree Warden.** The Tree Warden will insure that the applicant has a copy of and understands the Typical Tree Planting Detail. The Tree Warden will review conditions at the proposed tree planting site and will take into consideration other known plans for tree planting in the area. He will also

review the species and size of tree being proposed as well as the proposed location, necessary protection, and any other considerations.

2. **Tree Warden responds to application.** The Tree Warden will approve or deny the permit and will inform the applicant of any special conditions to be followed.
3. **Applicant informs the Tree Warden of installation date.** The Tree Warden will be present when the tree is delivered to the site. He will inspect it to insure that it meets requirements. If he accepts the tree, he will then oversee the planting and the development of a watering plan, one of the most critical components for successful tree growth.



NOTES

1. When possible mark the north side of the tree in the nursery and locate to the north in the new planting location.
2. Avoid purchasing trees with two leaders. Do not prune trees at planting except under the supervision of the Tree Warden.
3. Never carry a tree by the trunk or branches. Always move carefully by the root ball.
4. Minimize water stress to trees by covering trees to be transported; minimize shifting or movement in trucks. Keep root balls moist and in a shady location during storage.
5. Amendments depend on soil conditions and should be used only at the direction of the Tree Warden.
6. Mulch 2-3" deep - keep mulch away (3-4") from the tree trunk.
7. In most cases staking and wrapping are not necessary; do so only at the direction of the Tree Warden.

Typical Tree Planting Detail

Section VI: Maintenance Practices for Trees on Town Property

Proper maintenance is important to insure the health and vigor of trees and shrubs. This section outlines the maintenance practices that will be used for trees and shrubs on Ridgefield town property. Ultimately, the Tree Warden will advise on proper techniques.

Pruning

Specifications for pruning will follow the National Arborist Association's Pruning Standards for Shade Trees (revised, 2002). The Tree Warden has final discretion in all pruning decisions.

Pruning near utility lines will be performed by the utility companies as needed, in consultation with the Tree Warden.

Insect and Disease Control

Trees will be examined by the Tree Warden and arborists for possible infestation and disease. Appropriate treatments will be determined by an arborist and the Tree Warden. All treatments will be administered by a licensed Connecticut Pesticide Applicator, using the latest Integrated Pest Management (IPM) guidelines.

Fertilization

At the discretion of the Tree Warden, soil tests will be performed to determine the need for specific fertilizers and other soil amendments.

Mulch

In general, mulch will be applied around a tree to a depth not exceeding three inches. Mulch should not touch the trunk of the tree, and should cover the disturbed soil.

Tree and Stump Removal

The Tree Warden has complete discretion as to how and when a tree may need to be removed and will arrange for the removal and disposal of all parts of the tree. Stumps will be ground down, removed, or left, depending on each site's situation. The final decision on how to treat stumps will be determined by the Tree Warden.

Watering of Newly Planted Trees

The Tree Warden will arrange for the watering of newly planted trees. Depending on the weather and siting, watering could continue for two or three years after planting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American National Standards Institute, *For Arboricultural Operations - Pruning, Repairing, Maintaining, and Removing Trees, and Cutting Brush – Safety Requirements*; ANSI Z133.1-2000; New York, NY: ANSI, 2000.

American National Standards Institute, *For Tree Care Operations - Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance – Standard Practices (Pruning)*; ANSI A300 (Part 1) –2001; New York, NY: ANSI,2001.

Arnold, Henry F., *Trees in Urban Design*, Second edition; New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993.

Bassuk, Nina, BZ Marranca, and Barb Neal, *Urban Trees: Site Assessment, Selection for Stress Tolerance, Planting*; Ithaca, NY: Urban Horticulture Institute, Cornell University, 1998.

The Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation, *Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control*, 1998.

Connecticut General Statutes and Regulations of Interest to Arborists, Tree Wardens and Forest Practitioners, A Reference Guide; Center for Information and Technology, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut, 2001.

Dirr, Michael A., *Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*; Portland, OR: Timber Press. 1997.

Dirr, Michael A., *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Fifth edition; Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing Co., 1998.

Douglas, Sharon M., *Disease Management Guide for Connecticut Arborists*; New Haven, CT: Department of Plant Pathology and Ecology, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 1995.

Dreyer, Glenn D., *Connecticut's Notable Trees*; Memoirs of the Connecticut Botanical Society, No. 2, 1989, Second edition; North Attleborough, MA: Covered Bridge Press, 1990.

Himelick, E.B. and Gary W. Watson, *Principles and Practice of Planting Trees and Shrubs*; Savoy, IL: International Society of Arboriculture, 1997.

Hoke, John, Editor, *Ramsey Sleeper-Architectural Graphic Standards, Ninth Edition 1998 Cumulative Supplement*, New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1998.

National Arborist Association, Inc., *Electrical Hazards Awareness Program*; Rev. 1994.

National Arborist Association, Inc., *Pruning Standards for Shade Trees*; Rev. 2002.

National Safety Council, *First Aid and CPR*, Fourth edition; Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2001.

Phillips, Leonard E. Jr., *Urban Trees, a Guide for Selection, Maintenance, and Master Planning*; New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Inc. 1993.

Ricard, Robert M., Karl Reichle and Bruce Bennett, *Tree Warden's Manual*, Second edition; Tree Wardens Association of Connecticut, 2001.

Shigo, Alex L., *100 Tree Myths*; Durham, NH: Shigo and Trees, 1995.

Sydor, T. Davis and Randall B. Heiligmann, *Trees and Home Construction: Minimizing the Impact of Construction Activity on Trees*; Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University, School of Natural Resources, Bulletin 870.

University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System, *Tree Planting: How to Plant and Care for Trees for Connecticut Homes and Public Landscapes*; not dated.

Welch, Kenneth A. and Timothy M. Abbey, *Pesticide Guide Toward Integrated Pest Management for Connecticut Arborists*; New Haven, CT: Department of Plant Pathology and Ecology, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 1998.

Wyman, Donald, *Trees for American Gardens*; New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1990.

Appendix A: Town of Ridgefield Tree Ordinance

Ridgefield Code
Chapter 15
TREES*

Sec. 15-1. Short title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Ridgefield Tree Ordinance, Ridgefield, Connecticut.
(Ord. of 2-28-96)

Sec. 15-2. Intent and purpose.

(a) *Intent.* It is the intent of the selectmen of Ridgefield that the terms of this chapter shall be construed so as to promote:

- (1) The protection, preservation, proper maintenance and use of trees and shrubs on town property; the minimization of disturbance to woodlands, and the prevention of damage from erosion and destruction of the natural habitat.
- (2) The protection of community residents from personal injury and property damage, and the protection of the Town of Ridgefield from property damage caused or threatened by improper planting, maintenance or removal of trees and shrubs located within the community.
- (3) The protection of property values ensuing from the proper maintenance of street trees, natural, uncleared woodlands and trees of ecological or historical significance.

(b) *Purpose.*

- (1) To plan, protect and manage these arboreal resources for the benefit of the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of the town.

***Editor's note** --A ordinance adopted Feb. 28, 1996, did not specifically amend the Code; hence, inclusion of its provisions as a new Ch. 15, §§ 15-1-15-8, has been at the discretion of the editor.

Charter reference -- Tree warden, § 9-1 et seq.

RIDGEFIELD CODE

- (1) To recognize the benefits provided by trees, including but not limited to buffering noise and unsightly views, improving air quality, offering habitats to birds, preventing erosion, absorbing water, mitigating climate by cooling the air and providing shade, offering aesthetic benefits, increasing property values and generally improving the quality of life within the town.

(Ord. of 2-28-96, § I)

[For the purposes of this chapter, the following words, terms and phrases shall have the meanings herein set out:]

Forestry management plan: A management plan and resulting work plan prepared by the tree warden with the assistance of the tree committee for forestry work to be undertaken by the town. The plan may include but is not limited to: a long-range management plan; town tree inventory; regulations and standards for the planting, pruning, maintenance and removal of trees and shrubs on town property; lists of trees appropriate for planting in the town; and recommendations for the preservation of trees on construction sites.

Landmark, notable, and asset trees: Trees determined by the tree warden to be of great age or rarity; associated with an historical event or person; or of tangible value to the community for their scenic enrichment of the area and/or their ability to survive a specific disease. Special consideration will be given to the inspection and preservation of landmark, notable, and asset trees on town property. With the concurrence of the property owner, such designations may be applied to trees on private property

Property owner: The owner of record or contract purchaser of any parcel of land.

Public nuisance: Any tree or shrub or part thereof growing upon private or town property which is interfering with the use of any town property, infected with infectious plant disease, or endangering the life, health or safety of persons or property.

Shrubs: Woody plants, branched from the base, generally less than fifteen (15) feet tall when mature.

Town-property: Any property owned by the town or under its jurisdiction or management, including property within lawfully established rights-of-way but excluding dedicated open-space land under the jurisdiction of the conservation commission. Control shall extend to such limbs, roots or parts of trees and shrubs as extend or overhang the limits of any town road, but responsibility shall not be assumed absent actual notice of conditions warranting exercise of control.

Town rights-of-way: The unimproved portion of all town roads.

Trees: A woody plant, usually with one (1) main trunk, reaching a height of at least fifteen (15) feet when mature.

(Ord. of 2-28-96, § 11; Ord. of 9-19-01)

Sec. 15-4. Tree warden and tree committee.

(a) The tree warden.

(1) *Authority and power.* The tree warden, appointed by the first selectman with the approval of the board of selectmen as outlined in the Town Charter, Section 9-16, shall have all powers, duties and authorities ascribed to him/her as set out in the Connecticut Public Shade Tree Statute, particularly Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 23-58, 23-59, 23-60, 23-65, as the same may be amended, and this chapter.

(2) *Compensation.* The tree warden shall receive for services such compensation as the selectmen, duly authorized, shall prescribe.

(3) *Duties*

(1) Enforce all provisions of law for the preservation of trees and shrubs in the town.

(2) Develop and administer a forestry management plan for the town.

(3) Hire contractors for the pruning, maintenance or accordance with the long-range management plan and the specifications and standards outlined in the forestry management plan.

RIDGEFIELD CODE

- (4) Post a notice upon trees on town property of their planned removal at least ten (10) days before removal is to take place, unless the condition of the trees constitutes an immediate public hazard.
- (5) Issue permits as required by this chapter, first obtaining the written agreement of each person who applies for such permits that he or she will comply with the requirements of this chapter and the forestry management plan.
- (6) Select and identify any trees which qualify as "landmark trees", "notable trees", and "asset trees" on town property and, with the concurrence of the property owner, on private property.
- (7) Prevent damage to trees and shrubs on town property by any person, company, utility or state or federal agency. Damage may include but not be limited to: pruning, removing, defacing, cutting, painting, or marking trees; posting unauthorized signs on trees; injuring, mutilating, killing or destroying any trees or shrubs; permitting any toxic chemical including excessive road salt or other deicing chemical to seep, drain or be emptied on or about any tree; piling soil over roots to a suffocating depth or scraping soil above the roots; setting fires or burying rubble within the trees' root zones.
- (8) Supervise to the extent possible work affecting trees performed by public utility companies or their agents. Such work shall be reviewed prior to being undertaken and shall be done according to the standards of the forestry management plan. If as a result of such work trees are irreparably damaged, the tree warden shall require the company to pay for replacing the trees with a similar species.

(b) Tree committee.

- (1) Composition. The tree committee shall be composed of seven (7) members, three (3) appointed by the board of selectmen and four (4) appointed by the conservation commission. Each member of the tree committee shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years and terms shall be staggered so that at least two (2) members are appointed each year. Members shall serve without compensation. To increase effectiveness, applicants or vacancies should meet with the tree committee before being considered for appointment to the committee. Further, the committee may suggest to appointing entities certain skills, experience or committee preferences to be considered in applicants for appointment. The tree warden serves as a member ex officio.
- (2) Duties. The tree committee shall advise and consult the tree warden on any matter pertaining to this chapter and its enforcement. The topics under which this advice and consultation may be given may include, but are not limited to: amendments to this chapter; alterations or revisions to the forestry management plan; policies concerning selection, planting, maintenance, and removal of trees, shrubs and other plants within the town, and development of community educational programs.

(Ord. of 2-28-96, § 111; Ord. of 9-19-01)

Sec. 15-5. Applicability.

This chapter provides full power and authority over all trees, plants and shrubs located on town property and rights-of-way, and to trees, plants and shrubs creating a public nuisance.

(Ord. of 2-28-96, § IV)

Sec. 15-6. Permits.

(a) No person other than the tree warden may perform any of the following acts without first obtaining from the Warden a permit for which no fee shall be charged, and nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt any person from the requirements of obtaining any additional permits as are required by law:

- (1) Plant trees or shrubs of any size on town property or remove or otherwise disturb any tree located on town property or rights-of-way.

RIDGEFIELD CODE

- (2) Attach any rope, wire, nail, sign, poster, or any other man-made object to any tree or shrub located on town property or rights-of-way.
- (3) Dig a tunnel or trench, move or store construction vehicles, materials or equipment, or change the grade within a tree's root zone on town property or rights-of-way.

(Ord. of 2-28-96, § V; Ord. of 9-19-01)

Sec. 15-7. Private trees.

As trees on private property often have an impact on town property and rights-of-way and can under certain conditions pose a direct physical threat to the safety and welfare of residents as well as to town trees, the tree warden can determine that such trees or shrubs constitute a public nuisance.

Upon making this determination, the tree warden shall write the owner or tenant in charge of the premises informing him/her of the nature of his/her liability. Unless the condition constitutes a public hazard requiring immediate attention, the responsible person shall within thirty (30) days after issuance of the notice have the nuisance tree or shrub treated or removed as directed. No damage shall be awarded the owner for the trees or shrubs destroyed pursuant to this chapter.

In case the owner or tenant having charge of such premises shall refuse or neglect to comply with the terms of the written notice within thirty (30) days after receiving it, the tree warden shall cause the removal, treatment or trimming of said nuisance tree or shrub. The expense thereof shall be charged to the owner of the premises on which the tree or shrub is located and, with respect to the cost for removing that portion interfering with any public area or public way, shall become a lien on the property upon record of notice thereof on the town land records (Ord. of 2-28-96, § VI)

Sec. 15-8. Enforcement.

(a) No person shall unreasonably hinder, prevent, delay or interfere with the town tree warden or his/her agents while engaged in the execution or enforcement of this chapter.

RIDGEFIELD CODE

(b) Violation of any provisions of this chapter shall result in a fine and penalty of fifty dollars in addition to any cost of curing or abating said violation. If the violation is of a continuing nature, each day shall constitute a separate offense.

(Ord. of 2-28-96, § VII)

Appendix B: Relevant Websites and Telephone Numbers

Websites

Cornell Urban Horticulture Institute	www.hort.cornell.edu/uhi
CT Agricultural Experiment Station	www.caes.state.ct.us
CT State Library Records (most recent state statutes)	www.cslib.org/psaindex.htm
CT DEP Urban Forestry	www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/forestry/urbanforest/urbanfor.htm
CT Urban Forest Council	www.CTUrbanForestCouncil.org
FEMA	www.fema.gov
International Society of Arboriculture	www.isa-arbor.com
Northeast Center for Urban Forestry	www.umass.edu/urbantree
UConn Cooperative Extension	www.canr.uconn.edu/ces/forest/urbnshts.htm

Telephone Numbers

Call Before You Dig	800 922-4455
CT Agricultural Experiment Station	203 974-8500
CT DEP – Division of Forestry (Fred Borman, Chris Donnelly)	860 424-3630
CT DOT (Bruce Villwock)	860 594-2612
CT Notable Trees (Glenn Dreyer)	860 439-2144
CT State Forester (Don Smith)	860 424-3630
FEMA (Tim Barnett)	617 223-4856
Northeast Utilites (Dave Goodson)	860 665-6865
UCONN – Co-operative Extension, Urban Forestry (Bob Ricard)	860 570-9257