

CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA



*Adopt-a-Tree*

*Program*

## **ADOPT-A-TREE PROGRAM**

### **Overview**

Trees are an important asset to the City of Tarpon Springs and its citizens. For years, Tarpon Springs has been planting trees within the community. Through the Adopt-a-Tree Program, the City is able to form a valuable partnership with homeowners to help improve and replenish the overall tree canopy. The program is funded by the Tarpon Springs Tree Bank and emphasizes the use of native trees that do well in this area.

The City of Tarpon Springs, through the Development Services and Public Services Departments, will provide a variety of trees to homeowners to plant in the public right of way or swale area (the grassy strip between the pavement or street curb and the sidewalk) adjacent to their property. The homeowner must then plant the tree and care for it.

### **Homeowner's Commitment**

Adopting a tree is a big commitment and should be taken seriously. To participate in the Adopt-a-Tree Program, the homeowner must agree to the following conditions:

1. All trees must be planted on the public right-of-way, commonly referred to as the “swale” (the grassy strip between the pavement or street curb and the sidewalk) adjacent to their property. Since the trees are purchased with City funds, they are to be planted on the public right-of-way.
2. Trees must be planted within a few days of pick up. Trees are usually available for pick up on Friday so that the homeowner has the weekend to plant the tree. Containerized or potted trees are used in the Adopt-a-Tree Program to ensure higher survival and easier handling. Planting and initial care instructions will be given to the homeowner at the time of pick up. If the homeowner is unable to plant the tree right away, they must water it daily until it's planted.
3. The homeowner will water and maintain the tree so as to increase the chances of the tree's survival. Watering a tree once it's been planted through the first few months is critical for the tree's survival. Trees take much longer to establish than most people think. Most trees can take over a year to become fully established so during the establishment period, the tree will need supplemental watering.

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4. For safety and health reasons, Adopt-a-Trees are to be planted in a location that is:
  - a. At least 4 feet from the edge of curbed streets and 6 feet from the edge of non-curbed streets.
  - b. At least 15 feet from fire hydrants or street lights.
  - c. At least 25 feet from street corners and street signs.
  - d. Approximately 30 feet from another tree, whether newly planted or existing.

This provides for adequate space so the tree can grow to its mature size without obstructing street signs, lights or other trees.

5. Parking on the swale should be discontinued. Not only can cars damage trees, but the compaction caused by the weight of the vehicles will restrict the root growth of the tree and ultimately result in the demise of the tree.

6. Prior to planting, the homeowner must contact Sunshine State One (1-800-432-4770) to ensure that any excavation will not affect underground electric power lines, natural gas lines, communication lines and other utility services. This is a free service. This is to prevent injury to the homeowner and avoid any damage to underground utilities. Keep in mind, it is easy to do thousands of dollars in damage by simply digging a hole.

### **The City's Commitment**

As part of the Adopt-a-Tree Program, Tarpon Springs agrees to provide homeowners with:

1. Tree species that will best suit the character of the neighborhood and the conditions of the public right-of-way adjacent to their property. The homeowner will usually be given a choice of trees that match or compliment other trees in the surrounding neighborhood that will grow and flourish within the confines of the planting area.
2. Trees of proper quality, typically grade Florida #1 or better. Studies show that quality trees will live longer and cost less to maintain over their lifetime.

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3. Trees of a size easily planted by the average person. Usually, 15 gallon (6 feet tall) nursery stock is used so that the trees can be transported without difficulty and moved around with ease during the planting process.

4. Planting and care instructions will be given to homeowners at the time of pick up. This will be a step-by-step planting guide and care brochure that should provide all the information needed for proper care of the tree. Homeowners will be notified in advance of the time and date for pick up of their tree.

### **Homeowner Participation**

Participation in the City's Adopt-a-Tree Program is completely voluntary. Those who are interested in participating must complete an Adopt-a-Tree Application. Applications will be made available on the City's website at [www.ci.tarpon-springs.fl.us](http://www.ci.tarpon-springs.fl.us).

**City of Tarpon Springs, Florida**  
**Adopt-a-Tree Program Application**

*(Please type or print clearly)*

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Width of Swale: \_\_\_\_\_ feet

Overhead Utility Lines: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

This application is a request to the City of Tarpon Springs to enroll me in the Adopt-a-Tree Program. By signing below I evidence my commitment to the planting of one or more trees on the public property adjacent to my property. Prior to the planting of such tree(s), I agree to contact Sunshine State One (1-800-432-4770) to ensure that any excavation will not affect underground electric power lines, natural gas lines, communication lines and other utility services. This is a free service. Also, I will make sure that the trees are not planted under overhead wires, unless acceptable species have been provided.

I agree to water and maintain any such tree(s), following watering and care instructions provided by the City of Tarpon Springs so as to ensure their survival. I understand that the Tarpon Springs Code of Ordinances protects such trees and provides the sole procedure for their removal by a homeowner, if necessary.

I understand that when the City of Tarpon Springs and I sign this application, it is a binding agreement. I further understand that the City reserves the right to remove any tree planted pursuant the Adopt-a-Tree Program when such removal is deemed in the public interest, and that the City will make no compensation for such removal to the homeowner. In the event of any such removal, the City agrees to restore the location to as near its former condition as is feasible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature Date

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City of Tarpon Springs Date

Mail completed application to:

City of Tarpon Springs  
P. O. Box 5004  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688-5004  
Attn: Development Services Dept.