

Phase II of Tree Maintenance Program to Begin

The second phase of the Southern Village street tree care program will begin in January. This is the second year in a three year rotation that will eventually treat all of the street trees under the responsibility of the Southern Village Homeowners Association. Eco Logic Environmental Solutions is providing the service, which will begin with each tree being pruned for structure, visibility and safety. Then, as with phase one, root flare excavation, mulch bed expansion, and fertilization will be performed.

The three phases were delineated and prioritized according to the age and needs of each street's trees. This year's group includes those on Winston Ridge, Tharrington, Aberdeen, Graylyn, Brookgreen, Glade, Highgrove, Parkview west of Edgewater, and the 400 and 500 blocks of Copperline. Fliers will be distributed as each street is visited to alert residents about the work being performed and any requests (such as not parking under trees) there may be.

If you live on one of the streets that is included in this year's list, you may want to refrain from making any improvements, such as new mulch, to the tree beds in front of your house. Also, if you have any ornaments or plantings under them that you would like to salvage, it would be good to go ahead and move or transplant them in advance.

Once the treatment is complete to a tree, there are a few things you can do to help maintain it. When it comes to tree beds, the wider the better, so further bed expansion and mulch application is always welcome, but *please* do not let mulch be piled up in contact with the trunk. You will notice that all of the piled material has been removed during the root flare excavation to expose as much of the natural buttressing as possible. This is a critical step and a very important feature to maintain. Soil or mulch in contact with the trunk above the natural soil line can cause many decay and disease problems, as well as girdling roots which can actually encircle and strangle the trunk. Even if your landscaper applies it that way, move it back. Also, you may maintain the appearance of the tree by pruning off any "suckers" or stump-sprouts that appear after the treatment. Please contact us at trees@southernvillage.org with any questions, comments, or if there are disease or insect reports.

The drought has been hard on us all this past year and our trees are no different. Street trees are especially vulnerable to such extremes because they are already at a disadvantage in securing resources due to being nearly surrounded by paved surfaces. If you have the opportunity to water your trees, just remember that a long, deep soak is much more effective. A hose allowed to barely trickle in the root zone for an extended period or a vessel full of recycled bath water punctured to slowly leak can make a big difference. Try to avoid excessive fertilization during these dry periods as that can increase the tree's need for water.