

Tree Planting FAQs

Why are you planting trees?

The council recognises the important role trees can play in mitigating the effects of climate change; providing shade through heatwaves; and helping to alleviate flooding. They are central to the county's biodiversity, landscape and amenity. Trees in residential areas are especially important in improving mental health and wellbeing; reducing the speed of traffic; and combating noise pollution.

Why are trees being planted here?

There are several possible reasons why this site may have been chosen for tree planting. Most of our sites have been selected through a data-driven approach, while others have been requested by the public or are a location where we have removed a tree previously. Depending on where you live, the site may have been chosen as part of our strategy to plant trees where they are most needed in the county, in areas of low canopy cover and/or higher social deprivation, according to national metrics.

Why this species?

We use a "right tree, right place" approach in selecting which species to plant. According to Oxfordshire County Council's Tree Policy, we prioritise larger growing shade-providing trees, scaling down to smaller ornamental trees where larger species are not suitable. Species are chosen to match the local conditions and may have been selected with a specific feature in mind, such as visual amenity, food provision for wildlife or air quality improvement. We plant a mixture of native and non-native trees to ensure a diverse and resilient tree stock, and all trees are UK-grown and 'plant healthy' certified.

How big will this tree get?

This will mainly depend on the species and growing conditions, for example the quality of the soil. Our map of proposed planting locations will show a 'Maximum Canopy Space' on each tree. This is an approximation of the available space for the tree's spread once it is *fully* grown, and appropriate species are chosen partly on this basis. In most cases this will take many years for the trees to reach these sizes (even centuries for some species).

During the tree's life it will be regularly maintained, so any potential tree care may also affect the ultimate size of the tree, such as where branches are pruned back.

Who will look after the tree or how do I report an issue with the tree?

These trees are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council's Tree Service. For the first three years following a tree being planted, our Tree Aftercare and Planting Service team will be out to regularly inspect, water, prune and carry out aftercare and maintenance. As soon as the trees are established, they will be managed by the wider Tree Service. This management includes regular inspection by tree professionals and specifying tree care where necessary, ultimately through to removal when the tree reaches the end of their safe life expectancy. If you notice any issues relating to a young tree on the highway (these will be in a cage and/or supported with stakes and ties), please email us at tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

We always welcome volunteers to help look after the newly planted trees – to become a Tree Guardian, just get in touch at the same email address.

For issues relating to an established street / highway tree, please log the enquiry on [Fix My Street Oxfordshire](#). If your enquiry is related to a **fallen tree or emergency**, please **call** the Highway Enquiries phone number **0345 310 1111**. More details are available on the [Oxfordshire County Council website](#).

How might it affect my property? (urban cooling, house prices)

Trees, especially larger, wide-canopied ones, can be very effective at creating a cooler microclimate on hot days. Not only do they provide shade, through water loss from the leaves (evapotranspiration), they help cool the air. Large trees have additionally been shown to increase house prices by around 5%. They are an important amenity that promotes health and wellbeing.

What about underground and overhead utilities?

All planting sites are surveyed by qualified operatives on-site to confirm viability of the proposed location along with being cross-referenced with utilities plans to minimise the risk of any disruption to public utilities during tree planting and establishment.

How might this tree affect road safety?

Trees create the illusion of narrower roads which, studies have shown, has the effect of slowing cars down. We take care when planting trees to avoid blocking sight lines and to maintain the necessary clearance from the carriageway as the tree grows.

I want more trees in my area or why didn't I get a tree?

If you are interested in having more trees in your local area, particularly street trees, please visit the link below where you can submit an idea using our online form:

[Start a community tree or woodland project | Climate Action Oxfordshire](#)

Unfortunately, not all sites are suitable for tree planting. Roadside verges often contain underground utilities such as power and fibreoptic cables, or there may not be sufficient canopy space for a tree to grow into. If trees are being planted in your area, it may be that some sites have been found to be not viable.

Are the public informed prior to planting?

We attempt to contact residents within immediate proximity to planting sites, especially for larger projects, to explain our plans and request feedback. We carry out letter drops to share our plans and the information is also sent to parish and county councillors ahead of the planting being carried out.

I've been sent a map of planting sites, what does the map mean?

The map shows the locations of proposed planting sites for trees on highways land, to be planted this coming autumn-winter season (2024/25).

The map indicates the position and maximum canopy size of the tree we intend to plant at each site. This map is effectively 'live' and you will be able to see any changes that are made, including seeing what tree is to be planted in each location as they are selected by our Tree Aftercare and Planting Service.

I would love to look after trees, how can I help?

That's great! Please email tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk to become a Tree Guardian and help us water and keep an eye out for any issues affecting the tree. One of our team will be in touch with you to explain this further.

Regular watering through the summer for the first three years after planting can hugely improve the success of our trees and the benefits they are able to offer.

Can I plant a tree myself on public land?

The short answer is no. There are numerous public utilities underground (including high voltage power lines), and only OCC's Tree Service or approved, specialist contractors are able to carry out planting within the highway (footway, grass verges, etc.).

For other types of public land, you need permission to plant trees from the landowner – this may mean the county, district, parish or town council. If you have an idea for a tree planting project on public land, we may be able to help you identify the landowner and how you might proceed. Get in touch via our planting submission form: [Start a community tree or woodland project | Climate Action Oxfordshire](#)

How do I get more information?

Initially refer to the [Tree Policy](#) for general information about tree planting in Oxfordshire. If you have a specific question that has not been answered here, please get in touch by emailing tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk