

Hello neighbors - It's been another big year of tree planting in University Heights. The Tree board raised \$2300 for purchase of new trees, and planted 18 new trees with the money. All of them seem to have survived their first growing season. Our sponsors this year were MidAmerican Energy, Hills Bank, MidWest One Bank, UICCU, Total Tree Care, AW Welt Ambrisco and Stella Restaurant.

In September of this year I completed the fall maintenance program of re-mulching all trees and applying trunk protection to any tree small enough to need it. Trees with thin bark and on exposed sites got the heavy white plastic covers to protect them from animals and sun scald, while trees that are on more protected sites and/or not susceptible to sun scald damage got the black mesh plastic wraps that protect from deer, mice, and rabbits. I purchased all of these supplies myself, so please do not discard the protectors. I will remove the white ones in the spring and replace them with the black mesh kind, and we'll want to leave the black mesh kind on until the trunk outgrows them, generally around year 3 or 4.

As the growing season winds down in University Heights, I am looking forward to completing the next step in annual tree maintenance - pruning! As we have done in past years, I and a few of our locally trained Tree Keeper volunteers from Trees Forever will be going around town to prune our young trees. Annual pruning is especially important for young trees to keep them from developing weak structures or branches prone to failure. We will be removing competing leaders, subordinating aggressive branches and removing lower branches for better sidewalk and street clearance. Trees planted just this year will get only a light trim at most, while trees that have been growing for 2 or 3 years will likely get a heavier pruning dose this year as lower branches may be ready now for removal. We will complete all work in accordance with ANSI A300 pruning guidelines as recommended by the International Society of Arboriculture. We will begin this work as soon as a few hard freezes have hit Iowa, generally around mid-December. If you have any other young trees in your yard that you'd like to have pruned by our volunteers as we go around town please let me know. I would like all trees in UH to be healthy and strong, not just the city-owned ones.

As for 2017, I've already submitted the grant application to MidAmerican Energy that will hopefully swing another \$1000 to plant with next year, and the tree board will take up raising matching funds in the spring. We still likely have a few years before we start to lose the majority of our ash trees to EAB, and we should continue to use this time to get a head start on growing a replacement canopy. If you know of someone who wants a new street tree please tell them to email me. I expect we'll be able to plant another dozen or so.

As always, thanks so much for participating in this tree planting program. Our investment will reap years and years of benefits for us and future generations of University Heights residents.

Best,

Virginia Miller
UH Tree Board Chairperson