

Agenda, City of Bloomington Tree Commission
Monday 15 August 2022, 10-11 am, Switchyard Park

Introduction

1. Introductions

Consent agenda

2. Approval of Minutes of 18 July 2022, meeting (in your email)
3. Next meeting will be Monday, September 9, 10am, Switchyard Park

Discussions and Presentations

4. Public comment, if any
5. Engineering presentations

Reports

6. Urban Forester's Report (Tim Street)
7. Update on Urban Forester position (Tim Street)

Special focus of this meeting

7. The topic of this meeting is a. the tree species listed in the UDO portion of the Bloomington Municipal Code and b. the tree species listed in the Tree Care Manual. These should be reconciled with each other and with current practice.

Topics for discussion

I. In all publications, should we use some special designation for native trees, e.g., printing them in **bold**?

II. The regulations in the UDO supersede the regulations listed in the Tree Care Manual. The current UDO is newer than the Tree Care Manual. Tree Care Manual tree lists are an earlier attempt to codify what is now codified in the UDO.

III. The UDO and the Tree Care Manual are directed at different audiences.

The UDO species lists are legal technical specifications directed at landscape architects and designers who are working on plans for developments to be approved by the City.

The Tree Care Manual is directed at residents of the City of Bloomington. It is the principal educational resource that the Tree Commission creates to inform citizens about the choice, planting, and maintenance of trees. The City hands it out at public events such as the Farmers' Market and Arbor Day. It is available in several formats (online, in print). It is written in a style and format that is accessible to the general reader. It is the first source that City residents turn to for information about trees. It may be required for our Tree City USA status.

IV. The UDO is Title 20 of the Bloomington Municipal Code
(https://library.municode.com/in/bloomington/codes/code_of_ordinances)

The tree species lists are in Title 20, Section 04 "Development Standards and Incentives," subsection 080, "Landscape, buffering, and fences."

There are three tables relevant to the Tree Commission:
Table 04-14 Permitted Street Tree Species (table attached)
Table 04-15 Permitted Interior Tree Species (table attached)
Table 04-18 Prohibited Plant Species (table attached)

These lists include:

1. **Permitted** trees --- trees that can be included in any plan, with no complaints, "by right."
2. **Prohibited** plant species --- trees that may not be included in any plan because they are invasive trees or because they have poor growing characteristics.
3. Any other trees may be included in a plan, subject to the approval of the Urban Forester and the Tree Commission. (These are the engineering plans that we often review at our meetings.)

V: Suggested revisions to the UDO.

Table 04-14 Permitted Street Tree Species.

Erin revised this list earlier in the spring. This is the PDF Tim sent to us. It was submitted to Council by Planning and Transportation as part of a larger packet of revisions to the UDO, and approved, although it does not yet appear in the current version online.

Recommendation: leave this list as is.

Table 04-15 Permitted Interior Tree Species

The Tree Commission has jurisdiction over street trees, which are owned by the City; it does not have jurisdiction over private trees such as these interior trees.

Recommendation: revise this list and include it in the Tree Care Manual under a title like “Here are some trees you might not have thought of planting.”

Table 04-18 Prohibited Plant Species

The Tree Commission can edit this list and suggest to the Urban Forester that it be included in the next set of revisions to the UDO.

Recommendation: edit Prohibited Invasive Trees and Prohibited Plants with Poor Characteristics.

Consider adding Japanese tree lilac (Syringa reticulata) to the list as per: Mary’s note. Note that elm (ulmus) currently appears in both the permitted and the prohibited tree lists.

VI. The current version of the Tree Care Manual is dated 2017, prior to the completion of the tree species lists in the UDO.

Lists of tree species appear under the section “Bloomington Approved Street Tree Species.” There are nine tables: (copy attached)

Table 1: Small tree

Table 2a: Crabapple recommended

Table 2b: Crabapple not recommended

Table 3: Medium tree

Table 4: Large tree

Table 5: Undesirable species for street trees

Table 6: Tolerant of urban conditions

Table 7: Slow to recover from transplanting

Table 8: Planting season by species

VII. Crabapples

Crabapples are on the UDO list of prohibited plants with poor characteristics.

Recommendation: omit the crabapple tables.

VII. Miscellaneous tree species lists

Table 5: Undesirable species for street trees

Recommendation: replace with the UDO Prohibited Invasive Trees and Prohibited Plants with Poor Characteristics

Table 6: Tolerant of urban conditions

Recommendation: omit this table.

Table 7: Slow to recover from transplanting

Recommendation: omit this table.

Table 8: Planting season by species

Recommendation: omit this table.

IX. Revise the Tree Care Manual to better serve as an educational resource for City residents

The Tree Care Manual currently contains conflicting recommendations: some of the recommendations are about street trees, and some of the recommendations are about private trees. At the minimum we should separate these two sets of recommendations, especially because street trees already are covered in the UDO.

We can do more. We can include the information about street trees from the UDO. However, we can also do a better job of educating residents about what kinds of trees are good to plant by establishing some principles for selecting trees and by making suggestions of good trees to plant. This is important for two reasons. First, most people who are reading the Tree Care Manual are reading it to learn more about the private trees they plan to plant, not about street trees. Secondly, we can influence what private trees are planted by including specific desirable trees in our lists. For example, very few people are going to plant our native fruit trees --- persimmon and pawpaw --- in their yards unless someone suggests that these are desirable trees to plant.

Recommendation: replace the section “Bloomington Approved Street Tree Species” with a section entitled “Recommended Street Trees and Recommended Private Trees.”

X. Proposed organization for new section “Recommended Street Trees and Recommended Private Trees”

Part 1: Street trees

1. Special needs of street trees
2. Permitted street trees
Table: UDO list of permitted street tree species
3. Invasive trees: Why are they a problem?
Table: UDO list of prohibited invasive trees
4. Trees with undesirable characteristics: What characteristics make a tree bad for a street tree?
Table: UDO list of prohibited trees with poor characteristics

Part 2: Private trees and recommendations for residents

1. Plant more trees. In the past one tree in the front lawn was OK; in an era of climate change we need more tree canopy cover and more trees.
2. Plant native trees. Why are native trees especially valuable?
Table: Native trees: large, medium, small
3. Plant a variety of trees. Diversity is as important among trees as it is among people
Table: Here are some trees you may not have thought of: large, medium, small
4. Plant fruit trees. Fruit trees have innumerable benefits, and you get fruit, too.
Table: Recommended fruit trees. Persimmon, pawpaw go here. Fig? Serviceberry?
Table: Fruit trees to avoid, and why. Apple.
5. Plant nut trees.
Table: Recommended nut trees. Which ones?
Table: Nut trees to avoid and why. Black walnut

Handouts

- 2022 Updated Street Tree List UDO (from Tim Street)
- 2022 20—04 Table 04-18 Prohibited Plant species
- 2017 Tree Care Manual Bloomington approved street tree species list
- 2022 8 2 Ecologic LLC: Japanese Tree Lilac (*Syringa reticulata*)