

2016 Public Right of Way Tree Planting

The past year saw significant improvements in Robbinsdale's reforestation efforts for public rights of way and parklands. A city-run tree nursery called a Missouri Gravelbed was constructed in 2015. A total of 150 bareroot trees were planted by the City Forester between fall of 2015 and last spring using this nursery system. Even though the trees planted were generally smaller than trees planted from containerized or balled-in-burlap (B & B) stock, bareroot trees that are held in a gravelbed for several months establish faster and suffer less transplant shock following planting, and bareroot trees cost only a fraction of nursery trees that come with a soil ball. Furthermore, bareroot trees are easy to plant correctly and do not require a large crew or heavy equipment. After only a few growing seasons a smaller tree that was held in a gravelbed in most cases will be the same size or exceed the size of a traditional container or B & B tree, but with greater survival percentages and a much lower chance of developing a dysfunctional root system. This is the case due to the tremendously thick root systems that trees develop while being temporarily stored in gravel, leading to quicker establishment and reduced transplant shock.

The planting of trees in the fall following several months in the gravelbed will be the primary method for public reforestation efforts in the future. We have a growing number of sites for planting this fall but we have plenty of trees and need to hear from more residents who have adequate space and would like to have a tree planted in their section of public right of way. This area generally extends 12-14 feet from back of the curb. The list of 24 different available species is posted on the city's forestry webpage. The large planting initiative is driven by the need to replace the many trees that had to be removed either from insects/disease or due to storm damage or street reconstruction. If you have some open space in front of your property, would like a tree and are willing to water any new plantings (a TreeGator bag will be provided), please contact City Forester Stephan Papiz at 763-531-1273 or at spapiz@ci.robbinsdale.mn.us.