

TREE NEWS

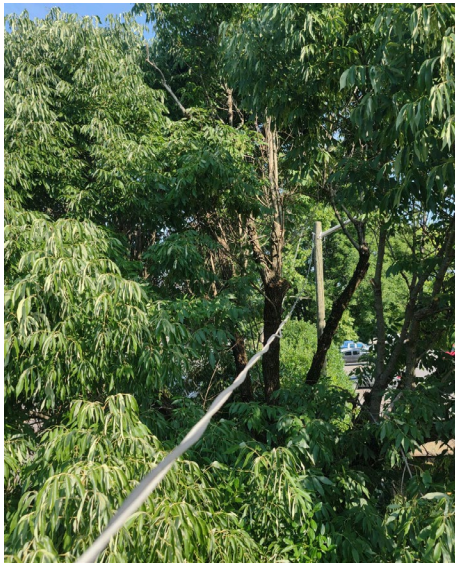
MARCH 2024

YOU CAN USE

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

WHERE NOT TO PLANT A TREE!

A well-placed tree can be a great addition to a home or business. It can add aesthetic beauty, increase the value of the property, and even help to reduce heating and cooling cost over time, but selecting a planting location without considering future conflicts can result in long-term and costly issues.



Above-ground Utilities

It's easy to grab a small tree from a garden center, but it's more difficult to imagine how massive some trees can become. Branches in contact with overhead power and communication lines can result in a loss of service during inclement weather, or worse, could become a potential fire hazard. Pruning around these energized conductors should only be done by professionals, and a misplaced tree could cost a homeowner thousands of extra dollars to maintain. Many municipalities discourage residents from planting trees within a utility right-of-way.

Underground Utilities

Plant roots are one of the most destructive weathering agents in nature. A small crack in a drainpipe is all that's needed for a tree root to enter and expand. Trees planted too close to septic tanks and drain fields can lead to clogs and backups. Even if roots don't damage your underground utilities, it's important to be aware that your utilities may need to be maintained or upgraded in the future using excavating equipment. Damage to a mature tree's root system could lead to premature loss of your tree. [Contact 811](#) to have your underground utilities located and marked **before** you dig.

Legal obstacles

Thinking that a tree you planted is your personal property in all cases could land you in the confusingly grey area of tree law. Utility rights-of-way maintained by your township or city may have local ordinances dictating how close to a utility a homeowner can plant. Violation could even result in removing an offending tree at the homeowner's expense. It's a good idea to look into tree-related ordinances in your area regarding right-of-way and easement access. Additionally, planting a tree to mark a property line with your neighbor might create a shared asset and responsibility with your neighbor and future owners of both properties. It could potentially require the consent of both properties "adjoining property owners" to legally remove the tree.

In the end, it's important to be mindful of potential conflicts that may exist in your landscape and [contact 811](#) for underground utility locations before you begin planting. It would serve all of us to think of trees less as ornaments and more like the investments they can be.



Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe
Professor
Urban Forestry



Dr. Natalie Bumgarner
Associate Professor
Residential & Consumer Horticulture



Sam Adams
ISA Certified Arborist
UT Knoxville Facilities Services



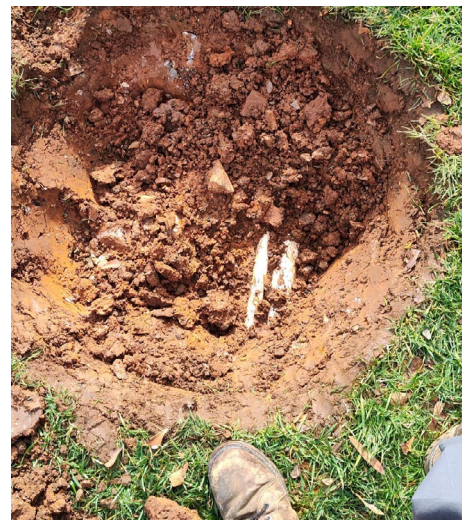
Lee Rumble
Extension Agent & ISA Certified Arborist
UT Extension, Knox County



Neal Vercler
Senior Arborist Tech, BCMA #SO-7529B
UT Knoxville Facilities Services



Walker Fowler
Tree Care Technician
UT Knoxville Facilities Services



SPONSORED BY:

KNOX COUNTY
UT EXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

T
SCHOOL OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES

T THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE
FACILITIES SERVICES

PLANT SCIENCES
UTIA INSTITUTE OF
AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE