Adopt a tree:
Help grow Kitchener’s urban forest

Did you know that, without weekly watering, up to 40 per cent of trees planted along city streets and in parks can die, and that during a drought, losses can be much higher?

Newly planted trees lose about 90 per cent or more of their root system during transplanting; they cannot survive unless they have adequate water.

The City of Kitchener has committed, through its strategic plan, to better manage and enhance the urban forest so that it continues to make Kitchener a livable city. After planting, watering is the most important action required for the tree to successfully establish itself. With climate change, drought conditions are becoming more common during the spring and fall, key time periods for tree root growth.

That’s where you can help.

How can I help?

A new pilot program hopes to ensure recently planted trees get enough water during the first two years. If you have a newly planted tree (identified by the presence of a green watering bag at the base of the tree) in front of your house or in your neighborhood, adopt and water it so it thrives and grows to its full height. With regular watering, newly planted trees will grow new roots one to three metres (three to 10 feet) beyond the root ball in the first year.

By getting involved, residents can get involved and play a key role in growing Kitchener’s future urban forest, so we, and the generations who come after, can reap the benefits of the tree.

Community stewardship is just one piece of the pilot program, which also includes:
- developing new educational material and advertising to increase public awareness;
- hiring three summer students and three new watering tanks to water trees during the summer months;
- increasing the number of watering access points and GIS-based route planning to improve the efficiency of city watering crews;
- contingency plans to address the need for increased tree watering during drought conditions, and;
- setting targets and monitoring to ensure the program is a success.

Based on current water and sewer rates, residents can water a newly planted tree for about $10 a year, during a normal season.

How much water does my tree need weekly?

During the first two years, recently planted trees need to be watered weekly from May to October.

You can access this information through the city’s urban forest website, following Kitchener’s social media, or by subscribing to a weekly e-mail sent out from treewatering@kitchener.ca.

Kitchener’s urban forest

Look for these three symbols (normal, dry, wet), which tell you how much water your tree needs each week.

normal:
- 000 per week
- During normal conditions with average rainfall.
- newly planted trees require 20 gallons (90 litres) of water each week.

Dry:
- 20 gallons (90 litres) twice per week
- During drought periods (recently planted trees can die in a very short period of time if regular watering is not carried out. During these times new trees should be watered twice a week, with 20 gallons each time. Watering should be spaced a few days apart.

Wet:
- No watering required
- During wet periods no additional watering is required. During these times, it is important to not water to ensure that adequate oxygen levels are maintained in the soil.

Anytime, anywhere

We live in a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week world. You want great customer service when it’s convenient for you.

The City of Kitchener is committed to delivering quality public services – efficiently and effectively – that meet the day-to-day needs of the community.

A seamless customer service experience means it’s easy to connect with us anytime, anywhere. Day or night, we are here for you.

If you need information or are requesting a service from the city, you can reach us any time, from anyone, on any device – through the Corporate Contact Centre, the city’s social media accounts, or the Pingstreet app. The call centre runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week; you can connect with a live person by calling 519-741-2345.

Each season, we’ll be featuring frequently asked questions (FAQs) from our citizens on the city’s website and our social media accounts. Visit www.kitchener.ca/ connect to view.