

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### *City's tree planting needs a well thought-out plan*

To tree or not to tree? That is the question. Clearly we need more trees. However, like many well-meaning solutions (note David Golson's "Silent Earth"), not seeing the long view over immediate gratification can often prove fatal. In this city, tree planting has carried on willy-nilly with no integrated plans too long. Disease-prone trash trees continue to be planted along causeways and streets in single species allées, despite hard lessons from Dutch Elm disease, acid rain and non-native trees.

Beyond the lack of interface and planning between the city's arborist and the dictatorship of Tree Fredericksburg, there is clear discrimination. To illustrate the disparity, the rich have enormous setbacks from utility strips, 200-foot stretches of turf without poles or driveways, and curb strips containing no trees. The elderly and poor with houses abutting the sidewalks have multiple trees where the city often ignores their own regulations to plant 30 feet away from utility poles.

No published tree planting plan with associated names of trees and maintenance instructions come with unwanted planting of trees. No calendar exists showcasing when residents might expect their trees trimmed, fertilized, watered or removed. My 50-foot tree (three feet from a utility pole) requires a sewer clean out yearly due to root encroachment, leaf removal, trimming of branches destroying my roof, risk from severe foundation damage, and auto clearcoat applications due to acorns, sap and insect droppings.

Caring for city trees or protecting one's property can have dire consequences, often resulting in huge fines. I object to restrictive laws such as requiring only trees and turf over pollinator gardens. I object to the lack of transparency, planning and abject unfairness of this city's tree plantings without kindness toward property owners. I don't object to trees. I love trees.

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