

The Borough of Wilkesburg plants trees in public places like city streets because they increase the value of real estate while beautifying our homes and commercial areas. They provide cooling shade in hot weather and remove pollutants such as carbon dioxide from the air and return oxygen to it.

Trees also take up storm water through their roots, decreasing the flow into sewers that are often old and overburdened. In addition, they have been linked to decreased crime and vandalism.

Trees may cause some inconveniences – leaves falling into gutters, growing roots may lift sidewalks.

Frequently asked questions about trees:

How do I report a problem?

- If you notice a tree that has been damaged, has large dead branches, an active insect infestation, or appears to be dying, call the Borough's administrative offices at 412/244.2900 or go to the Borough's website at www.wilkesburgpa.gov, and click on the "Service Area Request" – be sure to give contact information so that someone can get in touch with you. The tree will then be inspected by a qualified arborist who will make a recommendation about any further action.

Who owns the trees?

- Trees planted on private property, belong, of course, to the property owner.
- The area between the sidewalk and the street is part of the Borough's street right-of-way, and generally, trees planted in that area are owned by the Borough.
- If you're uncertain about the ownership of a tree, call the Borough administrative offices at 412/244.2900.
- Trees on public property, such as in parks or around public buildings, are owned by the Borough.

Who is responsible for the trees?

- The Borough's Shade Tree Ordinance (<http://bit.ly/1NUc50n>) provides that "the cost of planting, transplanting or removing any shade trees in and along the streets and highways in the borough shall be paid for by the owner of the real estate abutting the area where the work is done". This means that the cost of any work carried out on a tree is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.
- The Ordinance also includes a provision for Borough Council to elect to pay for work done on Borough trees adjacent to private property through other funds, however this is typically done only when hazardous trees causing a public safety issue need to be removed, or where a tree might spread disease to other Borough trees.

Do I have to pay to repair my sidewalk that has been lifted by a Borough tree?

- Yes. Sidewalks need regular maintenance and eventual replacement, whether or not a tree is planted nearby. However, the Shade Tree Committee is interested in working with residents who want to plan sidewalk repair that will accommodate the needs of street trees. If you believe that a Borough tree has lifted your sidewalk, call the Borough's administrative offices at 412/244.2900 or go to the Borough's website at www.wilkinsburgpa.gov, and click on the "Service Area Request" – be sure to give contact information so that someone can get in touch with you.

May I hire a contractor to cut the tree roots of a Borough tree in order to repair my sidewalk, or to trim or remove the tree?

- Maybe. Before hiring a contractor to carry out any work that will affect a Borough tree, including pruning its roots to repair a sidewalk, the homeowner must obtain a permit from the Borough's Code Enforcement Department. You can find the permit [here](#). Note that a permit application does not guarantee approval of the proposed work; the tree in question will be inspected by an arborist hired by the Borough, who will make recommendations based upon how the proposed work will affect the health of the tree.

May I plant a tree in the space between the sidewalk and the curb, adjacent to my property?

- Again, maybe. The homeowner will need to obtain a permit (available [here](#)) before planting in the space. It is also possible to request a tree, at no cost to you, from the Shade Tree Committee. The application can be located [here](#).

How can I participate in Wilkinsburg's tree programs?

- The Shade Tree Committee, created in 1992 by the Borough Council, welcomes resident involvement in its programs, which are aimed at expanding the urban forest and keeping it in good health. Return to the Committee page [here](#) for more information about the Committee, including meeting dates.