



Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I have a tree, there are trees everywhere!

A [recent study](#) showed that urban tree canopy in Honolulu lost about 76,000 trees from 2009-2012! We need to keep growing our tree canopy because...

Trees shade and cool landscapes and reduce overall water use.

Trees are an investment that give us many more benefits over their lives than the cost of water to help them get established.

Trees filter the air and water for all of us.

Trees slow stormwater runoff and recharge groundwater.

Trees reduce soil erosion.

Trees foster safer neighborhoods with lower crime rates.

Trees will increase your property's value.

Trees reduce temperatures so you save money on A/C.

Trees provide cooler and healthier communities.

Who's paying for this? How is this free?

The Division of Urban Forestry of the City and County of Honolulu is funding this pilot community forestry program through the non-profit Smart Trees Pacific.

The Citizen Forester program, the volunteers of which have made this program possible, is funded by the State's DLNR Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program and Region 5, USDA Forest Service.

What can I expect in this project?

A Citizen Forester or Smart Trees Pacific staff member will check in on the tree and provide watering reminders to you and inform the City of issues as needed within the first few years of tree planting. The funds from the grant will provide everything but water. The City will be removing stakes after establishment period and giving the tree one structural pruning in the second year.



Who else is getting offered trees?

We are reaching out to your neighbors in Olomana and Maunawili because of the leadership of Citizen Forester in your neighborhoods. In the future, we hope to use this program as a model to offer trees to other communities.

Are the trees messy? Will it shed leaves/flowers?

Some trees do drop leaves seasonally. However, the benefits you will receive from the tree year round will far exceed the minor inconvenience of occasional leaf drop.

Water is expensive, why should I water it?

It actually only costs about \$7 to water a tree in its first year (15 gallons, 2x week). You can reduce water use even further by watering with captured shower water, watering in the early morning or evening to reduce loss from evaporation, and watering slowly to let the water soak into the ground instead of running off.

Won't any tree I plant undermine my building's foundation, invade my sewer and water lines and buckle my sidewalk?

Your site and tree species was chosen to fit within the space available. Most tree roots only grow in the top 24 inches of soil. They do not hurt underground mains, unless these are already damaged and provide entrances for developing roots.

What kind of tree?

The choices of trees available in this program are dependent on the size of your site, the City's street tree list, and local availability.

Why do I have to sign this adoption agreement?

Think of this agreement like a handshake commitment to help your new tree grow. This tree adoption agreement is not legally binding. However, tree survival requires water. We want you to take this seriously to insure that the trees planted through this program survive and are not wasted. We will assist you with the information and reminders you need to water your tree!

Why was my neighborhood chosen over others? Why can't everyone get a tree?

This is a pilot program built off of the successful Citizen Forester program - a program that aims to train local volunteers and map public trees. Citizen Foresters in your neighborhood wanted to bring urban forestry to the next level and have been working with the City developing this tree planting program. We hope to expand to other neighborhoods in the future. Logistically, it was also important for the trees from this



program to be near to each other for ease of coordinating volunteers and post-planting monitoring.

Where will the tree be planted?

The tree will be planted in the public right-of-way adjacent to your home in a suitable planting site. Generally, this means within 10ft of the curb and with clearance of utilities (like wires, underground sewers, etc).

I don't own this house, I rent. What do you advise?

You must seek the permission of your property owner. We are requesting at minimum a three year commitment to water the new tree. If you can commit to that, please sign up!

Can you plant the tree closer to my house?

No. This program is for the planting of City trees, so they must be in the City managed public right-of-way. This will allow the tree to be included in the City's routine pruning cycles.

Who will trim the tree over the years?

The City will trim the tree as part of its routine pruning cycles. You are not responsible for tree trimming. Please do not trim city trees.

Do I need to provide fertilizer?

No. In general, it is not necessary to fertilize trees. They adapt well to soil fertility conditions when planted. Consistent watering when young and as-needed throughout the life of the tree is the most important care you can provide.

Mahalo for your interest!

Contact hoolaau@smarttreespacific.org with any questions or comments!