



Town of East Hampton Tree Warden's Newsletter

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According to Connecticut General Statutes Section 23-58, every city and town in the state of Connecticut must have an appointed tree warden. In the Town of East Hampton, Keith Hayden is the appointed Tree Warden, and Ruth Plummer is the appointed Deputy Tree Warden. Both employees are certified by the Tree Warden Association of Connecticut in cooperation with UConn Extension System. In order to maintain this certification, each person must complete 15 credit hours of approved classes or workshops within a three-year period. Areas of knowledge include tree biology, tree structure and function, insect and disease, proper pruning practices, tree selection, public affairs, and tree law.

The responsibilities of municipal tree wardens are to ensure that public trees are preserved, maintained properly, removed if deemed hazardous, and replaced if feasible. Municipally owned trees are those within the limits of any public road or grounds in the town except trees along state highways under control of the Department of Transportation. Connecticut Statutes gives public utility companies the right to cut or trim trees to protect lines and wires from encroaching vegetation.

Connecticut has one of the most heavily wooded service areas in the United States. It is estimated that there are 185 trees along every mile of road in our state (more than twice the national average). CL&P and UI invest millions of dollars annually on proactive vegetation management programs.

CL&P has:
17,000 miles of overhead wire
712,000 utility poles
280,000 transformers
235 substations

UI has:
3,200 miles of overhead wire
82,000 utility poles
49,225 transformers
47 substations

Produced by:
Ruth G. Plummer, Deputy
Tree Warden

CL&P and UI combined infrastructure
delivers electricity to over 1.5
million customers in Connecticut.

Tree risk assessment and management is achieved in the Town of East Hampton by assessing the risk factors of an identified tree. Calls from concerned residents are one way a tree is brought to the attention of the Tree Wardens. Another is by taking inventory of trees by street. GIS mapping software is used to determine property boundaries. Trees on residential property are the responsibility of the land owner. Trees in the Town's right of way are the responsibility of the town as long as they are not on state roads or on private roads. In 2011, not including the trees downed by Tropical Storm Irene, 43 trees have been inspected by the Tree Warden staff. Of those trees, 18 were identified as hazardous, posted, and removed.

Many of the trees inspected are reported to the staff by residents. Once the wardens have gone out and inspected a tree, they perform a risk assessment taking into consideration the degree of possible failure, potential targets, as well as other hazards. Back in the office, the staff relies on the Global Imaging System (GIS) to determine ownership of the identified tree.

Trees identified as being in the town's right of way (that pose an immediate danger) are pruned or removed as soon as possible. In accordance with Chapter 451, Section 23-59 of the Connecticut General Statutes, trees with lower risk factors are posted for pruning or removal in 10 days.

Once a tree is posted residents can appeal the decision by contacting the Tree Wardens. The appeal is heard by the Tree Wardens in a Public Hearing. Testimony is heard as to why the tree should not be removed. Then the decision is either upheld and the tree is removed or overturned and the tree is spared.



East Hampton has approximately 91 miles of road with trees in our right of way.

There is a large population of maple trees in East Hampton, many that are over 150 years old. In the early 1800's, rock maples were planted along Main Street by Dr. Francis D. Edgerton and other residents who wanted to beautify the town's Main Street. Several of these trees have been lost in recent years to wind, insect, and disease. Each species of tree is susceptible to certain diseases, insects, and intrinsic weaknesses. The Tree Wardens not only prune and remove hazardous trees, but they also preserve and restore trees with replanting programs. Residents can do the same thing. Selecting adaptable and appropriate kinds of trees improves the chances of tree survival over the long term.

Homeowners who are responsible for the pruning or removal of trees on their property should hire only professionals who have an established business, have references, and carry the proper insurance.

Many times, residents contact the Tree Wardens seeking advice or help with trees on their property. Determining the health and potential hazards of an aging or diseased tree can be difficult. Licensed arborists can assess trees for possible hazards and make recommendations for proper care and control using best management practices.

Boundary trees are those trees in which the trunk of the tree is literally on the boundary of two neighboring properties. The "co-owners" of these trees each maintains the portion of the tree on their property based on the trunk. It is important to communicate (in writing) with your neighbor your plans to care for your portion of the tree to prevent disputes. If the trunk is completely on a neighboring property, you can prune limb or branches that

are encroaching on your property as long as you do not trespass and do not cause any harm to the tree.

When a resident has concerns about the health and safety of a neighboring tree affecting their property and safety, start with a friendly conversation with the tree owner. It is then advisable to put your concerns in writing. Then if the tree owner does not remediate the problem and you sustain property damage, you have documentation of having put the neighbor on notice.

References:
Connecticut Tree Wardens Manual, 3rd edition
Connecticut Tree Protective Association
Trees and the Law manual
Connecticut Tree Laws: A compilation
of Pertinent Statutes and Regulations
The Connecticut Magazine Vol.V. June
1899, No. 6.



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