

# PROTECT OUR NATIVE TREES

PLEASE READ THIS BROCHURE FOR  
INFORMATION AND HELPFUL HINTS  
CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION  
OF OUR NATIVE TREES

## **EASTERN CROSS TIMBERS**

(Sandy areas between pockets  
of Blackland Prairie)

Grapevine, Colleyville, Southlake, Keller,  
Irving and Arlington

*Normal rainfall: 32 inches*

*Normal average low temperature:  
31° to 42°*

*The purpose of this brochure is to increase your awareness of the proper care of your native trees before and after home construction. By following the information provided, many of your trees will survive and provide you with much enjoyment throughout the years, and you will be helping to preserve our native forest.*

## **KEEP YOUR TREES SAFE DURING CONSTRUCTION**

You love your trees! That's the reason you purchased the land . . . there were trees! We hope to give you some helpful information to assist you in protecting those beautiful native trees during the construction of your home. With a few precautions, planning, and much diligence, you will soon be sitting under the canopy of your beautiful native trees sipping on a glass of lemonade!

## **WHY PROTECT AND SAVE OUR NATIVE TREES?**

We are fortunate to have so many native trees in the Grapevine, Southlake, Keller and Mid-Cities area. Trees provide us with shade for our outdoor activities; they protect and shade our homes in the summer heat and help lower utility bills; they provide shelter for wildlife for our enjoyment, and they increase the value of our homes! Native trees filter pollutants from the air. They provide oxygen for us to breathe! The old forests of this area can and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy!

### **PLAN AHEAD**

Before any heavy equipment enters your property, have a long discussion with your contractor. A plat of your land should show the location of all trees on your property. Study the plat carefully with your contractor and decide which trees are to be saved. Remember, you cannot save them all. But save all sizes! Some smaller trees could be large for that species. Small trees will adapt. Determine which trees must go, carefully remove them and put the wood through a chipper. Save the chips and spread three to four inches thick in areas where the construction trucks will park. This will help protect the native soil and result in less damage to the area.

### **THE CRITICAL ROOT ZONE**

The critical root zone is the surface area around the tree trunk out to the most distant reach of the tree's branches. The roots in this critical root zone which carry nutrients up the tree are within the top 18 inches of soil. Destroying too many roots in this area will kill your tree. Cutting across this root zone for water lines, sewer lines, and sprinkler lines cuts off the tree's ability to receive nutrients from the soil in that area, and therefore, should be kept to a

minimum. If you must cut through the root zone, do not cut through more than 50 percent of the tree's roots. Another option is to bore under the tree.

### **FENCE AROUND YOUR TREES**

Now that you've determined which trees you want to save, take the proper steps to save them! Place fencing around the critical root zone of the trees you want to save. Be sure your contractor is aware the fenced area means "no trespassing!" The fenced area should remain until all work is completed.

### **COMPACTION IS THE CULPRIT**

The worst culprit around trees during construction is the compaction of the soil in the critical root zone by the bulldozers, trucks, and other heavy equipment. Very little activity should take place near the protected trees. The landscape contractors should know what's best for your trees following construction; but you must take responsibility for their well being at all times.

### **NO TOXIC CHEMICALS**

Residue from mixing or cleaning paint brushes near trees will be harmful to your trees. Toxic solvents that painters use should never be dumped near trees. Discarding cement mixtures, concrete and mortar near trees should be avoided.

### **DO NOT CHANGE THE GRADE**

Do not change the grade around the trees. Adding or removing soil around the root zone of a tree will alter the ability of the roots to serve the tree's needs. Piling soil up against the trunk of the tree can cause severe damage to the tree. Storing bricks, lumber and other building materials for extended periods of time on the critical root zone will cause damage. The "final grade" could be the end of your trees. Do not change the grade around trees.

## EXCESS WATER

Increased watering around native trees can cause damage; irrigation lines must be carefully planned around trees. Drainage changes may cause natural runoff to be diverted and either add or take away normal water for the trees. Carefully choose plants to be planted under trees. Native, drought-tolerant plants or none at all would be best.

## PRUNE PROPERLY

For pruning questions, and further advice on protecting your trees, contact a certified arborist. Proper pruning and planning can save many trees following construction damage.

## AERATE THE SOIL

When the construction is completed, aerate the compacted soil, add a thin layer of some rich, organic compost to the area, water carefully and follow an Earth-friendly, non-toxic program in your garden.

## IS IT WORTH THE EFFORT?

You might think "why bother?" Sounds like there is no hope to save those native trees? It can be done—and, it has been done successfully. The native trees in your garden are worth saving for years of enjoyment. Native and adapted plants will make gardening a positive experience, and saving your native trees is an important part of living in the Eastern Cross Timbers area of Texas.

## EASTERN CROSS TIMBERS

### NATIVE TREES

Some of the native trees found in our area are: Post Oak, Blackjack Oak, Cedar Elm, American Elm, Eastern Redbud, Possomhaw Holly, Mexican Plum, Texas Ash, Eastern Red Cedar, Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum, Carolina Buckthorn, Hackberry, Soapberry, Prickly Ash, Desert Willow, Black Walnut, Wax Myrtle, Eve's Necklace, Mexican Buckeye, Vitex, Pecan, Bois

d'Arc, Texas Mulberry and more.

Native trees range in size and age from young sprouts of all species to several hundred-year-old species.

Other native plants in the Eastern Cross Timbers ecoculture are smooth sumac, American beautyberry, coralberry, Arkansas yucca, persimmon, smooth sumac, Virginia creeper, bluestem grasses, love grass, wildflowers, and much more.

Of course, poison ivy is native here, too; so look before you touch! Note the difference between Virginia Creeper (five leaves—a great ground cover) vs. poison ivy (three leaves) Greenbriar is an unfortunate dominant part of the understory. Pioneers described this area as an "impenetrable forest"; but after the briar is removed, a wonderful understory will provide wildlife sanctuary for birds and small creatures, and cool pathways to explore.

## RECOMMENDED TREES FOR PLANTING IN EASTERN CROSS TIMBERS AREA

**Deciduous:** Caddo Maple, Shantung Maple, Japanese Maple, Chinese Pistachio, Ginko, Bur Oak, Chinkapin Oak, Shumard Red Oak, Lacey Oak, Cedar Elm, Lacebark Elm, Texas Ash, Sweet Gum, Bald Cypress, Eastern Redbud, Texas Redbud, Mexican Redbud, Mexican Plum, Flowering Crabapple, Aristocrat Pear, Crape Myrtle and other native trees.

**Evergreen:** Southern Magnolia, Austrian Pine, Leyland Cypress, Eastern Red Cedar, Southern Live Oak, Yaupon Holly, Texas Mountain Laurel, Little Gem Magnolia, Wax Myrtle.

## DO'S AND DON'T'S FOR PLANTING A TREE

### DO:

- Plant the right species for your area
- Plant with maximum growth and location in mind

- Plant trees slightly above grade with the root flare visible.
- Plant a variety of tree species
- Plant in the fall/winter months for best root growth
- Trim roots that have circled the container-grown tree before planting
- Water trees during first year and in drought
- Apply mild organic fertilizers near trees
- Spread bark mulch and shredded leaves, or plant ground cover under trees rather than planting turf grass which competes for water.
- Prune carefully only when necessary leaving branch "collar"
- Remove dead branches and mistletoe
- Get professional help when in doubt

### DO NOT:

- Plant trees too deeply
- Plant trees too close to the house
- Remove, add or change the soil levels near trees
- Change drainage or grade near trees
- Dig trenches for utilities or sprinklers near trees
- Compact the soil over a tree's critical root zone

### A Few Definitions:

**Native**—growing in the area naturally

**Understory**—plant growing naturally under larger canopy of trees; needs protection from hot sun.

**Critical Root Zone**—area measured from the trunk of the tree to the farthest reach of the branches

**NOTE:** If you are unsure of the native species in your yard, contact members of the Grapevine Garden Club, Master Gardeners from the Texas Extension offices or your local certified nurseryman.

GRAPEVINE GARDEN CLUB, INC.

Grapevine, Texas

[www.grapevinegardenclub.org](http://www.grapevinegardenclub.org)