Trees are a vital part of a city's permanent infrastructure. At the same time they are filtering the air, sequestering carbon, and helping create a healthier environment, they are providing beauty and ambience to the City and its neighborhoods.

The most visible city trees are those located in what is considered the "tree row" – the area between the curb and sidewalk or in the right-of-way if there is no sidewalk. Park trees, trail trees, and cemetery trees are also part of the City's rich "green and growing" heritage.

Terre Haute is proud to be a Tree City USA. To receive this nationally recognized standard of excellence from the National Arbor Day Foundation requires the City to have a tree care ordinance, a city tree board, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2 per capita, and an Arbor Day observance with a proclamation from the mayor.

The city tree care ordinance is located in Article 13 Sec. 6-189 thru 6-207 of the City Code. As part of this ordinance, contractors who work on city trees are required to be licensed and bonded by the city and to have a permit from the City. These can be arranged through the City Forester. Arbor Day is celebrated the last Friday of April.

To maintain our "green and growing heritage" so our children and grandchildren can live in a beautiful city, new street trees must be planted annually. The city –working with TREES Inc., an all-volunteer not-for-profit urban forestry council – is striving to rebuild the city tree canopy. This is an on-going effort.

Tree Care

Trees, like other parts of a City's or home's infrastructure, need attention and care. It is hoped that citizens of Terre Haute will recognize the financial and aesthetic value of trees on their private property and provide correct care for their own trees.

Some basic guidelines for tree care:
Water sizable newly planted trees weekly for three years from Easter through Thanksgiving if there is inadequate rainfall.
Mulch around the base of the tree in a doughnut shaped ring. Don't damage the bark of a tree with a weed-eater or string trimmer as this can cause irreparable harm to the tree and hasten its demise.
Protect your trees.
Don't top or round trees.
Don't park on the soil under the tree as this compresses the soil making it extremely difficult for the tree roots to get adequate nutrients.
If you prune limbs, do not leave a stub – remove the branch just outside the collar, a visible "swollen area" near the base of the limb; nature can heal such a wound.
Protect yourself. Do protect yourself by hiring a bonded/licensed tree care provider. Pruning trees can be dangerous – and you would prefer that your homeowner's insurance not be tested in case of an accident.

When planting trees, visualize the "adult tree" and plant the "right tree in the right location."

For example, tall trees and overhead utility lines conflict. Just when the tree is mature and taking on its natural shape, it gets pruned in an unsightly way. This is particularly true since the 2003 power-grid failure; utility companies have new federal mandates to keep transmission lines clear. Solution: do not plant trees that will grow "tall" under utility lines. Birds do this – and we can't help that! – but we as humans can do better!

When planting in a tree row, consider the width of the tree row – plant small trees in narrow tree rows; larger trees in wider tree rows. This may help prevent tree roots and sidewalk conflicts as the tree grows.

Some species are not appropriate for urban settings – a list of prohibited species is available from the City Forester.

When planting trees near your home, plant so the tree can help you. Trees can provide wind breaks or shade. Plant so there will be as little roof/tree branch conflict as possible. Allow plenty of room.

When planting a tree, have the root flare above ground level.

For more information on tree related topics:
    www.arborday.org
    or
    Vigo County Public Library

For more information on how you can help locally: www.treesinc.org