



TreeKeepers

Conserving urban forests

**Our big trees
are valuable.
Let's keep them
standing tall.**



Stately old gums on 2nd Avenue, Harfield

Trees are a valuable part of our community's urban landscape. They bring many benefits and should be maintained and never felled without carefully considering the alternatives.

If you are thinking about pruning or felling a tree, here are some facts and tips about trees. It might be simpler than you think to save them, and the rewards will last you a lifetime.

The many benefits of big trees.

Suburbs with lots of mature trees are sought-after and more valuable. But that's just a small part of the role trees play. Trees clean the air we breathe and are necessary for a healthy environment and a healthy life.

Here's what trees do:

- Give us shade in summer and shelter from wind.
- Clean the air of pollutants, provide oxygen, and absorb CO².
- Green and beautify our streets and homes.
- Reduce traffic and other noise.
- Provide a safe refuge for birds and other wild creatures.
- Condition and improve soil quality.
- Provide places for tree houses and swings.
- Add value to properties.
- Provide tranquil places for relaxation and enjoyment.



Living with trees.

Many people see trees as friends and so put up with their sometimes annoying habits to enjoy the fun, shelter and protection they offer!

And, for every tree problem there is a solution. Trained arborists (qualified tree specialists) can advise on the most suitable and cost efficient ways to do this. City Parks can be also contacted for advice with trees growing on City Council or public property and pavements.

Some simple ways to live with trees:

- Branches can be pruned carefully to allow more space or sun.
- Roots can be cut back and growth redirected.
- Boundary walls and fencing can be built or renovated to keep trees standing.

Be wary of advice from inexperienced operators.

They may have a financial interest in recommending a tree be cut down and removed, rather than being well-pruned and left standing.

Residents come up with many creative ways to accommodate big trees.



Non-indigenous trees are valuable too.

Exotic (alien) trees were introduced to the Cape centuries ago because they thrive in sandy soils and give shade during our long hot summers. Many indigenous trees don't do well outside of riverine forests.

Oaks, gums and other non-indigenous trees have therefore become an important part of our culture and history. Many are not invasive and don't spread easily.

Gum (or eucalyptus) trees have wrongly been given a bad name.

In cities and suburbs they are not classified as 'alien invasives' so should not be unnecessarily removed. They are specially useful on the Cape Flats where they provide shade, windbreaks and wood for fires and building.

Many large non-indigenous trees have been declared national monuments. In cities, big trees provide nesting places for birds of prey that help control rodents – which is good for our health and safety.

Today I have grown taller from walking with the trees.

Karle Wilson Baker

Trees offer so much to children.



Trees in Heritage Areas.

Because of its long history, Cape Town has precincts zoned as Heritage Areas. Applications to fell or radically prune a tree in these areas or near historic buildings must be submitted to the Heritage Resources Section of the City Council. Heritage Areas can be in private or public property. Visit the City's website to check whether you live in a Heritage Zone.

In the planning process for sub-divisions and rezonings, the Council can impose conditions to protect existing trees on a property. City Park's own Tree Policy also promotes measures to avoid removing mature trees on Council or public land that it manages.

Some special indigenous trees are protected with fines against any pruning or removal. Milkwoods and yellowwoods for example require a permit from the Department of Forestry before any work can be done on them.

*I think that I shall never see
a poem as lovely as a tree
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

Joyce Kilmer

Big trees have become landmarks in suburbs throughout the Cape.



Caring for trees.

Big trees do not need much time and attention to stay in good health.

Here are some tips:

- Clear the space around the base of the tree.
- Mulch the area with woods chips or compost.
- Protect trunks from weed-eater damage.
- Deep water your trees during hot spells in summer.
- Give a good helping of organic fertilizer in autumn and spring.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and so reduce the risks of climate change. The trees we have are essential and need to be protected.

Join in to help keep them standing tall!

*Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.*

George Pope Morris

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For more information and resources,
visit:

www.treekeeperscapetown.org.za



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