

How We Select Our Trees

Parks' Central Forestry & Horticulture division works with experienced tree growers to make sure that only the healthiest specimens and most appropriate species are selected for planting - beautifying our sidewalks shading our streets and providing New Yorkers with a host of benefits for many years to come.

The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation contracts directly with reputable nurseries to achieve this goal. Each nursery is a little different in size and customer base, but all have sold trees to municipalities throughout the nation for several decades. Each nursery provides between 4,500-7,000 individual specimens of approved tree species per year, all of which are grown to very specific standards. The most common species we procure are Zelkova, Sophora, and PlaneTree.



Through many years of arboricultural experience, Parks has refined its tree procurement strategy. Each tree is inspected annually, as it grows in the nursery; before it's harvested; and at delivery to ensure the tree meets Parks' exact specifications. By working directly with the nursery, Parks can now obtain not only higher quality trees but also many great urban trees that were not readily available in the nursery industry.

An important stage of our tree selection process is what we refer to as "tagging." Each tree that is planted is literally hand selected by highly trained individuals that are looking for only the best trees. The next time you decide to take a stroll around your neighborhood, pay attention to the tags installed on newly planted street trees. Every tag indicates the year in which the tree was planted, while the MillionTreeNYC tag indicates what species of tree it is. See if you can start identifying the tree species on your own!

For more information on NYC Parks' tree procurement, please see the article:

[Tree Procurement Contracts: New York City's Quest for Amazing Trees](#) (PDF, 306 KB)
http://www.milliontreesnyc.org/downloads/pdf/Tree_Procurement.pdf

Download the [2005 NYC Street Tree Census](#) (PDF, 1 MB)
http://www.milliontreesnyc.org/downloads/pdf/2005_Census_Leaf_Key_Final.pdf

Benefits of Our New Procurement/Planting Process

The new process has three major benefits for New York City:



1. A high quality standard that is leading the industry.
2. A wider array of tree species that haven't previously been available. With this expanded selection that better meets the wide mixture of planting locations throughout the city, Parks is now able to more accurately match "the right tree for the right location."
3. Parks now has a direct conduit to a wealth of knowledge via the staff at each nursery. Our partner nurseries have

extremely dedicated and talented people working for them who collectively have hundreds of years of experience, which means that if we have a question we cannot answer within our office there is a great resource for us to ask only a phone call away!