

# City of Madison Streets & Urban Forestry Division

ONBOARDING VIDEO #5

Frequently Asked Questions – Urban Forestry

March 2025



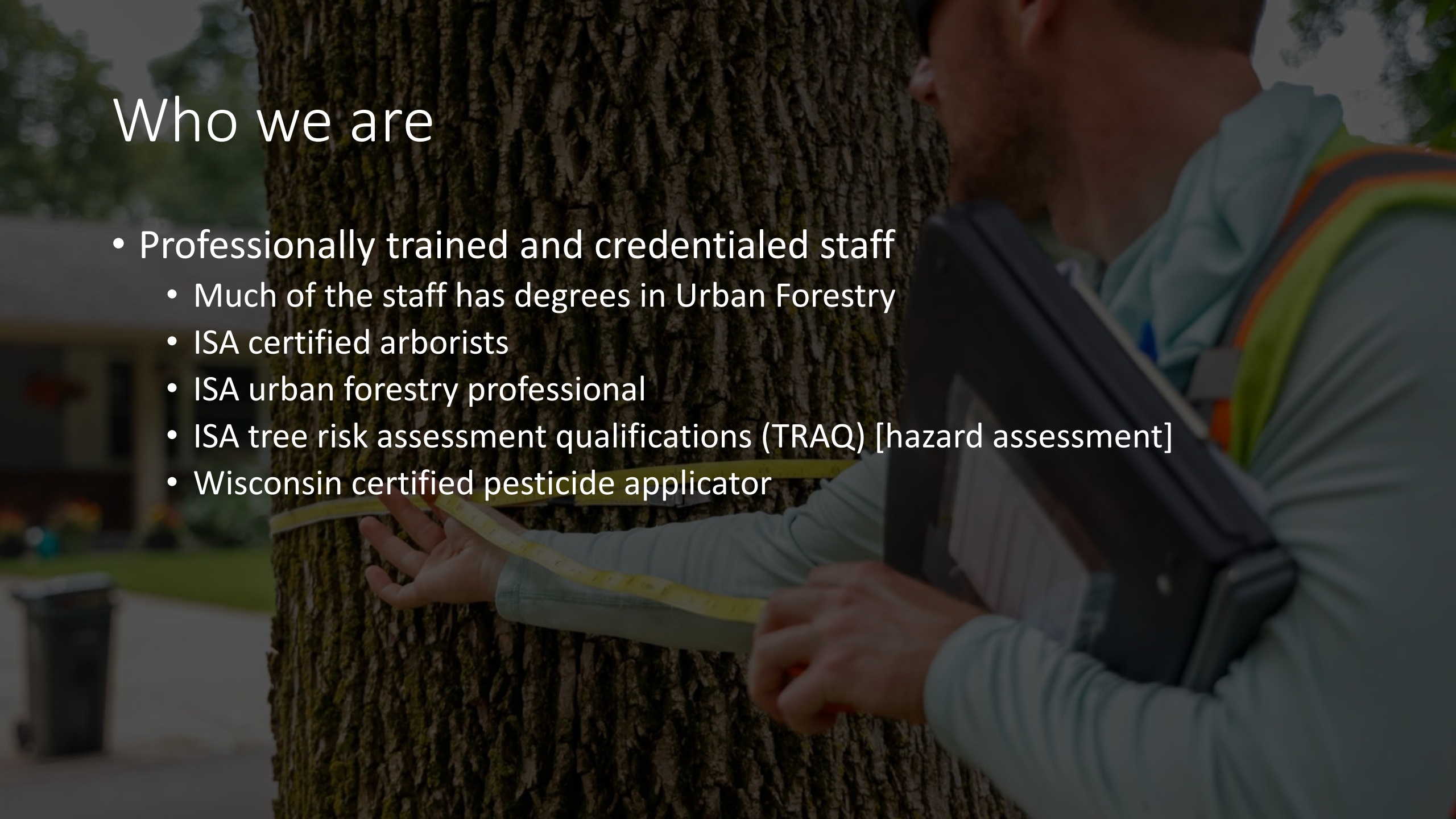
# What does Urban Forestry do?

- Manage & maintain 100,000 public trees along the terrace
- Primary tree support and advocate for public trees across the city.
- Source of information & expertise for the entire community about trees
- Emergency response (public tree falls, tree falls across road, etc.)



# Who we are

- Professionally trained and credentialed staff
  - Much of the staff has degrees in Urban Forestry
  - ISA certified arborists
  - ISA urban forestry professional
  - ISA tree risk assessment qualifications (TRAQ) [hazard assessment]
  - Wisconsin certified pesticide applicator



# *What are the benefits of an urban forest?*

- Reduce heat island effects
- Improve air quality
- Improve stormwater run-off management
- Lower homeowner's cooling costs in the summer
- Provide habitat for wildlife
- Improve physical and mental health, and generally improve the quality of life.

*There is a construction project and I'm worried about the trees...*

Urban Forestry is part of the planning process for Engineering projects, and we act as an advocate to keep the trees in place and add trees where possible.



# *There's something wrong with the city tree. Help!*

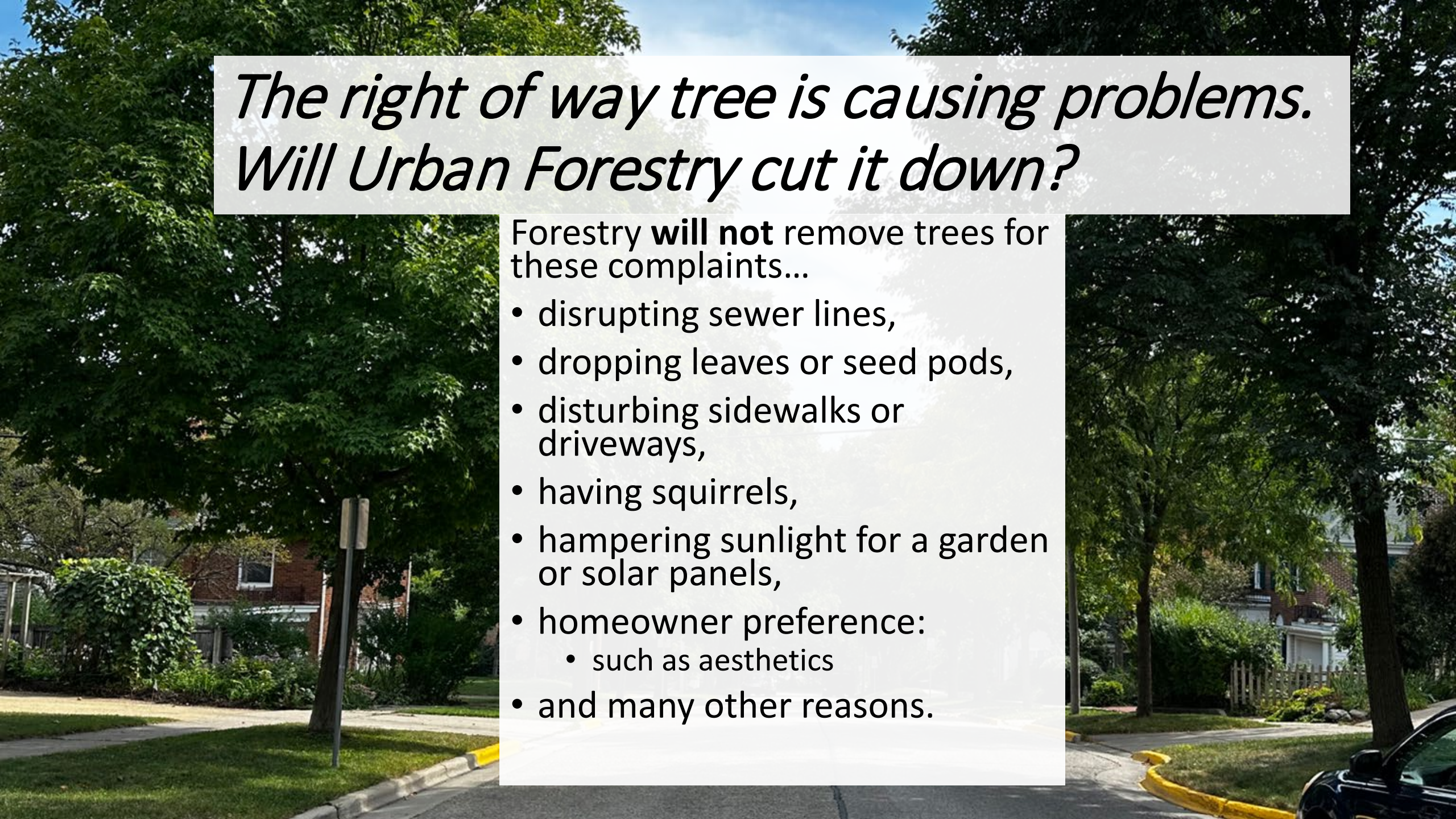
Urban Forestry responds to calls for service as soon as possible.

- <http://www.cityofmadison.com/ReportaProblem>
- 608-266-4816

## **Common Problem Examples:**

- Trimming branches that are touching a roof
- Dangling / hanging limbs
- Trimming branches blocking a sidewalks.
- Hornets nests and wasp nests.
  - If the nest is low or poses some other hazard.





*The right of way tree is causing problems.  
Will Urban Forestry cut it down?*

Forestry **will not** remove trees for these complaints...

- disrupting sewer lines,
- dropping leaves or seed pods,
- disturbing sidewalks or driveways,
- having squirrels,
- hampering sunlight for a garden or solar panels,
- homeowner preference:
  - such as aesthetics
- and many other reasons.



# *Why are trees removed?*

- Dead
- Dying
- Public safety



# *What's the status of the emerald ash borer?*



Pre-emptive removals are done.

Treatment ongoing.

Will investigate calls of concerns about a tree being infested.

# *What's the status of the spongy moth?*

- Population spiked in 2022
  - Continued in 2023
- Population crashed in 2024
  
- Details available at [www.cityofmadison.com/SpongyMoth](http://www.cityofmadison.com/SpongyMoth)
- Moth in caterpillar form isn't fatal to trees by itself
  - Causes defoliation that leads to stress on a tree when stacked with other stress like drought, these problems combine to be a problem for trees
- Spongy moth has been with us for decades and it will remain with us. Urban Forestry will monitor & respond as needed.



# *The city took down a tree in front of my house and the stump is still there. What's going on?*

The stump will be removed. Process takes time.

- Balancing priorities
- Equipment & staffing
- Locating underground utilities
- Depends on when tree is removed, too.



# *Will the city plant canopy trees?*



- The city's **community tree canopy** goal is 40% - in other words, if seen from overhead while trees are fully leafed out, the goal is to only see 60% of the ground.
- Yes, large trees creating a wide canopy will be planted where it is appropriate to do so.
- 90% of trees planted in 2024 were large canopy species trees.
- Planting canopy trees in places with overhead wires is unhealthy for the tree and possibly deadly for people who have to trim them.

# *The trees on my street have never been pruned. Why?*

For trees planted within the last 10 years, Forestry aims to prune them every three to five years.

For older trees, the goal is to prune them once ever 10 years.



# *Why can't I just trim the right-of-way trees myself?*

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Doing the work, but doing it the wrong way can make a problem worse and can damage the tree.

Our arborists are professionals trained in the proper maintenance of trees and will fix the issues safely the first time.



# *There's a tree emergency! What do I do?*



During normal business hours (7:00am to 3:00pm) contact Urban Forestry directly. Call us at 608-266-4816.

After hours should contact the Dane County non-emergency number so the on-call arborist can respond.



# *My neighbor has a tree that's in rough shape. What do I do?*

Urban Forestry supports Building Inspection for these concerns.

Forestry does not inspect private trees on their own.

BI would then issue an order to the homeowner that has the problem tree. And a private service would be needed to perform any required work.



# *Can a resident choose the tree that's planted on their terrace?*

No.

Trained city staff ensure the correct tree is planted so it can thrive in the limited right of way space.

Need to factor in other tree species nearby, overhead wires, and other concerns.

To create a diverse canopy, arborists strive to have 3 different tree species per block; and want no more than 30% of the same family; 20% of the same genus, and 10% of the same species citywide.



# *What tree is in front of my house?*

We have a Tree Inventory of public trees on the Urban Forestry website ([www.cityofmadison.com/Forestry](http://www.cityofmadison.com/Forestry)).

Enter your address into the inventory and learn about the tree species.





**Ian Brown (City Forester)**

608-266-4816

[ibrown@cityofmadison.com](mailto:ibrown@cityofmadison.com)

[forestry@cityofmadison.com](mailto:forestry@cityofmadison.com)

**Charlie Romines (Streets Superintendent)**

608-266-4680

[cromines@cityofmadison.com](mailto:cromines@cityofmadison.com)

**Bryan Johnson (PIO & Recycling Coordinator)**

608-267-2626

[byjohnson@cityofmadison.com](mailto:byjohnson@cityofmadison.com)

[streets@cityofmadison.com](mailto:streets@cityofmadison.com)

[www.cityofmadison.com/Forestry](http://www.cityofmadison.com/Forestry)