

**History of Tree Planting Excerpt from:
Rhinebeck Environmental Actions and Policies Report
for the Joint Town and Village Environmental Committee**

https://www.rhinebeckny.gov/uploads/3/9/4/4/39447425/2018-07-26_rhinebeck_environmental_policies_and_actions.pdf

May, 2018

Since its inception in 2009, the Tree Commission has sponsored a Spring and Fall planting, and to date over 300 trees along streets and in Village parks.

In 2010, the Tree Commission compiled a tree inventory of all streets on digital disc. The inventory included location, species, trunk diameter, height, and condition of trunk and canopy for each tree. This established a baseline for local tree diversity and highlighted the need for increasing diversity to protect the Village from a major loss of trees in the event of disease or pest outbreaks. In the time since this initial inventory, many of the trees have been removed and many more have been planted. This inventory should be updated and put online or into tree inventory software. [Note: new tree inventory is being undertaken late 2019/early 2020].

In 2011, a grant from Trees for Tribes funded the planting of trees and shrubs along the banks of the Landsman's Kill and Crystal Lake. Most of these plantings have survived, and some have grown quite large. Another grant funded planting a row of Sugar Maples along Mill Road at Grasmere Cemetery, as well as trees along Route 9 and in the Village center. Rhinebeck named a Tree City USA community by the Arbor Day Foundation. This status had been conferred each year since.

In 2016, Central Hudson, working with the Tree Commission, proposed to remove approximately 100 trees throughout the Village at a cost of \$60 per tree. The standard price for removal is roughly \$1,200. The selected trees were damaged by years of pruning by Central Hudson during routine power line maintenance, and many were inappropriate species or inappropriately sited to begin with. The number of trees to be removed was alarming to Village citizens, and a small but vocal group developed to fight the proposal. This was an election year, and the Village Board was swayed by the protest. To date, the majority of the trees are still standing.

The Village also promotes water quality and infiltration through the maintenance of an urban tree canopy. This priority was outlined under Land Use Goals 3.6 and 3.7 in the Village Master Plan. Goal 3.6 states that the Village should maintain existing street trees and replace trees that die or 12 are removed, with a target of 20 new trees of varying species planted each year. Goal 3.7 directs the Village to work with the Town to support and reinforce the Village's role as the community center of Rhinebeck, including planting tree rows at Village entranceways and preserve open space buffers to define Village boundaries. The Village Tree Commission has worked to plant hundreds of trees and remove dead and dying trees. There are occasional conflicts between the Sidewalk Committee and the Tree Commission. In these cases, sidewalks

are generally preferred because their presence is an issue of immediate human safety, while trees can be replaced. Sidewalks are at risk of being damaged by trees that were planted inappropriately (i.e. the wrong species were selected and planted without the use of structural soil, leading to sidewalk buckling). In the past, the Village shared the cost of tree removal and sidewalk repair, but a previous conservative administration shifted this cost entirely to the property owners. This can lead to damaged or damaging trees being left in place for too long, since property owners are not willing or able to pay. The Tree Commission has also developed a book of appropriate tree species and worked to promote biodiversity in plantings. At times, Village officials or citizens have preferred the aesthetic of monoculture plantings, but diversity makes the plant community more resilient and animal-friendly.