

## **An Introduction to Growing Friends and the Boulevard Tree Program**

The purpose of Growing Friends is to enrich the quality of life in the Helena, Montana, area with extensive plantings of suitable, attractive, diverse and well-cared-for trees and shrubs. Growing Friends works by funding and conducting planting projects, by educating the public and decision-makers, and by encouraging and assisting local governments.

Growing Friends of Helena, a nonprofit corporation, was founded in 1990.

### **Who Is Eligible for the Program?**

All property owners in the City of Helena who want to plant and care for boulevard trees are eligible.

### **Where Are the Trees Planted?**

The trees are planted in the boulevard planting strip. This is generally the strip of land between the curb and the sidewalk. In places where there are no sidewalks, or the sidewalks are next to the curb, there may still be space available to plant trees.

### **What Trees Should I Plant?**

There are a limited number of species that are both hardy enough for our climate and suitable for boulevard planting. The most common boulevard trees in Helena are green ash, linden, locust, some maple and elm species and non-fruit bearing, flowering crabapple trees. The best tree for your boulevard depends on the space available, other trees in the neighborhood and the location of utility lines.

### **Who Decides Where and Which Tree Species to Plant?**

A Growing Friends member will meet with you, measure your boulevard and suggest the number and types of trees that have the best chance of growing at your location. Growing Friends will coordinate with the City of Helena to obtain permission to plant at your location and arrange for the underground utilities to be located.

### **Who Will Plant the Tree?**

This is the fun part. On planting day, a group of Growing Friends members arrives at your property and helps you plant. Growing Friends provides the trees, planting material, a deer guard and supporting stakes. Growing Friends asks that you be ready to dig if physically able and have water available. With many helping hands, it doesn't take long to carefully plant a tree.

### **What Is My Obligation?**

You will be expected to contribute between \$35 and \$50 per tree, depending on the tree species you plant. You also must care for the tree. This means regular watering, insect and pest control, if necessary, and protecting the tree from damage.

### **How Do I Request a Boulevard Tree?**

Write to:  
Growing Friends of Helena  
PO Box 709  
Helena, MT 59624

Be sure to include your (1) name, (2) telephone number and preferred calling time, (3) street address and a general description of where you want to plant boulevard trees and (4) mailing address, if different from the planting location address.

You may also send your request via our Contact page on our website at:  
<http://growingfriends.org>

### **When Should I Send in My Request?**

Send in your request any time. Priority is given to block or neighborhood plantings over single location plantings. Growing Friends budgets an amount of money each year for boulevard tree plantings and then plants trees until the money runs out. The actual planting will take place in May and early June of each year. We don't plant during the Summer, it is too hot and dry. In most years, the planting resumes in October, until the weather changes. The sooner you send in your request, the better chance you have of being included on the planting schedule.

### **How Will I Know if Growing Friends Will Plant at My Location?**

Growing Friends will contact you, usually in late March or April. A meeting will be set up to check out your location, select a tree or trees and work out details of the planting.

### **How Do I Become a Member of Growing Friends?**

Request to become a member by sending \$20 or more to the above address.