



# Resolving Tree-Sidewalk Conflicts

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BULLETIN

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*In resolving conflicts between trees and sidewalks, as in so much of life, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*

With careful planning there are many ways to avoid such conflicts. Bulletin editor Jim Fazio describes them well: wide treelawns, proper species selection, tree wells, root barriers and better built sidewalks are examples.

I hope you will follow his good advice to head off problems between your own trees and sidewalks, and that you will work to bring about this kind of foresight throughout your community.

With good planning, the cost of tree-sidewalk conflicts can be substantially reduced.

Dealing with tree roots and sidewalks that are already tangled can be a more difficult matter. The solutions may require compromises, such as narrowing the sidewalk beside the tree, adjusting the new sidewalk's location, or wisely accepting imperfect concrete if that saves beautiful trees.

Solutions to tree-sidewalk problems can enhance your city's landscape. Brick pavers, tree grates, and retaining walls can be interesting visual elements in the urban fabric. These features, together with the specimen trees which they preserve, can give your town a feeling of quality and distinction. They'll advertise to your residents and visitors that you care about the things that matter.

When conflicts between trees and sidewalks arise, I hope you will do everything possible to resolve them in favor of the trees.

Matt Harris, Chief Executive  
Arbor Day Foundation



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