

## Trees- Planting and Management

Trees are an important part of our rural landscape providing shade and acting as shelterbelts and windbreaks. However trees that are too close to power lines significantly increase the risk of power outages and can create serious safety hazards.

***Did you know that the August 14, 2003 blackout was the result of a tree on a right-of-way in Ohio that came into contact with a powerline and triggered that massive loss of power?***

If you have a power line on or near your property, it doesn't mean you can't plant trees, but it is important to look up and look down. When landscape planning, check with a nursery to determine mature height and top span of potential tree choices and growth patterns of shrubs.

***Look up*** and consider a tree's size at maturity when planting near overhead power lines. A tree that grows too close to the electrical wires will need to be trimmed regularly to maintain safe clearance and that maintenance will require a professional Utility Tree Trimmer.

***Look down*** and ensure there is a safe distance between trees and equipment sitting at ground level such as transformers and switches (the green metal boxes known as pad-mounted equipment) and know the location of underground utilities when planning your landscape design. It is the law that your utilities must be located before you dig.

If you have a secondary line connecting your home to a power line, avoid planting trees that will grow into the line. If you don't see a secondary line connected to your house, your secondary line is underground. Either way, follow the guidelines to ensure the safety of the system and to avoid/reduce vegetation management costs.

***Tree distance planting within the West Wetaskiwin REA distribution system right of way is 12 meters – that is 6 meters on either side of the line.***

Regardless of where you're planting, before digging, you must contact Alberta One Call to have utility lines marked. Once they're marked, remember to carefully dig around utility lines with hand tools.

It is important for members to realize they are responsible for the maintenance of trees or vegetation on private property affecting the secondary power lines. If you need to schedule a time to have your power temporarily disconnected in order to have maintenance done, please call 310-WIRE (9473) or 1-855-333-9473.

For your safety, never attempt to trim trees near high voltage power lines-***only certified Utility Tree Trimmers are allowed to work on or around energized power lines – that's the law!***