

Bench & Tree Donation Program

Guidelines

A guide for donating benches and trees in City parks and trails

Includes

General guidelines – Bench donations – Tree donations – Plaque wording –
Standard tree species



Bench & Tree Donation Program

General Guidelines

The Bench and Tree Donation Program supports public enjoyment of City parks and trails by allowing donors to contribute benches or trees in approved locations. Donations may recognize a person, mark a meaningful occasion, or support a favourite public space while helping enhance parks citywide.

Donors may contribute toward a new bench or tree, **if space is available in the requested location**. Donors may also sponsor an existing undedicated bench or tree. A recognition plaque will be installed on or near the donation.

These guidelines apply only to bench and tree donations. Requests for any other donation, dedication, or memorial must be submitted to the City of Orillia's Environment and Infrastructure Services Department for review.

Donation criteria

- Donations must support public enjoyment of parks and must not interfere with accessibility or park use.
- Donations should fit the look, feel, and intended use of the park area.
- Donations must not make regular park maintenance more difficult for staff.

Your donation becomes part of the park for everyone to enjoy. The City recognizes your contribution with a plaque, but the donated bench or tree remains public property. Donors do not receive priority or exclusive use. Parks staff maintain donated items as part of regular park operations, but donated items cannot receive priority maintenance over other park assets.

Location selection guidelines

- The proposed asset must fit the appearance and character of the surrounding park area.
- Donors may choose from existing undedicated benches or trees, or request a new installation where space is available and the Department approves it.
- The asset must not block access to park areas, amenities, paths, or other public spaces.
- The asset must not interfere with regular maintenance. For example, a bench placed in the middle of a large open field could affect grass cutting and trimming.
- Locations with recurring vandalism or damage to park assets will generally be avoided. If a donor still requests one of these locations, the Department may relocate or remove the asset if needed.
- If an asset must be relocated, the Department will try to contact the donor before or after the relocation. The Department makes the final decision on relocation.
- Administrative staff will ask you to complete the *Bench and Tree Donation Program Application*. The application collects the information needed to order and install the donation, including plaque wording. Payment covers the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the donation. Staff will provide a payment receipt, and the City's Finance Department will mail the charitable donation receipt.
- Staff will work with you to confirm whether a donation is available, what type of asset is suitable, and where it may be located. After your application is approved and payment is received, you may be invited to an on-site meeting with Parks staff to confirm the asset type and exact location. The Department makes the final decision on the donation type and location.
- A bench donation term lasts 15 years. During that time, the Department may replace the bench and/or plaque up to two times if the Department determines replacement is needed.
- After 15 years, the bench may be renewed for the cost of a new donation. The original donor will be given the first opportunity to renew, and the City will make reasonable efforts to contact them. If the donor does not renew, the bench and plaque may be removed or rededicated.

Definitions: "Department" means the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department. "Asset" means a bench or tree.

Bench & Tree Donation Program



Orillia Bench

Bench Donation Guidelines

How to donate a bench

1. Choose the park or trail section where you would like the bench to be located. It is helpful to include a second-choice location. Submit a completed *Bench and Tree Donation Program Application* to enviroservices@orillia.ca, or drop it off at the City of Orillia, 1st Floor Customer Service Counter, 50 Andrew Street S., Suite 300, Orillia. Plaque wording must be final when you submit the application.
2. Staff will review your application. If it is approved, staff will contact you to arrange payment. Payment may be made by cash, cheque payable to the “City of Orillia,” or debit card.
3. After payment is received, staff may contact you to arrange an on-site meeting with Parks staff.

Donation amounts — effective January 1, 2026

- **Standard Bench:** \$1,769.00, or \$2,601.00 with optional concrete pad where required.
- **Decorative Bench:** \$3,745.00, or \$4,578.00 with optional concrete pad where required.
By-Law 2024-037, Chapter 456 of the City of Orillia Municipal Code — User Fees — Recreation, Youth and Culture, Schedule A — User Fees — Tree and Bench Dedication Program.
- The donation amount includes the bench, plaque, installation, maintenance, and repair for 15 years. You will have the option to renew when the term ends.
Concrete pads are required in some park areas. Parks staff will let the donor know if a concrete pad is required for the requested bench donation.
- Bench donations are tax deductible. The City of Orillia will issue an official receipt to the donor.

Installation and location choices

- Installations are seasonal and depend on weather and ground conditions. Plaque production and installation may take three to four months. Some parks or trail sections may have a waiting list.
- After you decide to proceed and payment is received, staff may contact you to arrange an on-site meeting with Parks staff to discuss bench type and possible locations.
- A bench may need to be relocated if it requires frequent repairs or if the park area is redeveloped. If relocation is needed, the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department will move the bench and cover the related costs. The City will make reasonable efforts to notify the original donor.

Respectful use of donated benches: *The City understands that a bench may have sentimental value; however, it is not considered a memorial or shrine. Flowers, wreaths, pictures, fixtures, or similar items are not permitted at the site or on the donated item.*

Bench & Tree Donation Program



Tree Donation Guidelines

How to donate a tree

1. Choose the park where you would like the tree to be planted. It is helpful to include a second-choice location. Submit a completed *Bench and Tree Donation Program Application* to enviroservices@orillia.ca, or drop it off at the City of Orillia, 1st Floor Customer Service Counter, 50 Andrew Street S., Suite 300, Orillia. Plaque wording must be final when you submit the application. You will then be placed on the donation list.
2. When your name is next on the list, staff will review your application. If it is approved, staff will contact you to arrange payment. Payment may be made by debit card, cash, or cheque payable to the “City of Orillia.”
3. After payment is received, staff will contact you to arrange an on-site meeting with the City Arborist to discuss the exact location and tree species.

Donation amounts — effective January 1, 2025

- **Standard Tree:** \$468.00. Standard species options are listed in this guideline.
- **Special Order Tree:** \$572.00.
- The donation amount includes the tree, plaque, installation, and maintenance.
- Tree donations are tax deductible. The City of Orillia will issue an official receipt to the donor.

Installation and location choices

- There are two planting seasons each year: spring and fall. Requests for spring planting must be received by March 1. Requests for fall planting must be received by August 1.
- After you decide to proceed and payment is received, staff may contact you to arrange an on-site meeting to discuss tree species and possible locations. The City plants species that are suitable for different park settings. If you are donating a new tree, the City Arborist will help select a species that suits the chosen location.
- A tree may need to be relocated or changed to a different species. If this happens, the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department will complete the relocation or species change and cover the related costs. The City will make reasonable efforts to notify the original donor.

Species of trees

- Available tree species may be selected from the approved list in this guideline. The City Arborist makes the final decision on species and location.

Respectful use of donated trees: *The City understands that a tree may have sentimental value; however, it is not considered a memorial or shrine. Flowers, wreaths, pictures, fixtures, or similar items are not permitted at the site or on the donated item.*

Bench & Tree Donation Program

Donor Plaque Wording Guidelines

Inscription guidelines

Plaque wording should be uplifting, inspirational, or focused on enjoyment of the park or trail area where the asset is located, while still honouring the person who is the subject of the donation. All wording must be approved by the Environment and Infrastructure Services Department.

Plaque sizes and wording limits

Plaque type	Size and wording guidance
Bench plaque	6.5 cm high by 20.5 cm long (2.5 inches by 8 inches). A maximum of five lines and approximately 30 characters per line is recommended. The plaque is attached to the bench.
Tree plaque	12.75 cm high by 12.75 cm long (5 inches by 5 inches). A maximum of eight lines and approximately 15 characters per line is recommended. The plaque is mounted on a post placed in front of the tree.

Sample inscriptions

Theme	Sample inscription wording
Sharing a love of parks	John Smith Sharing your love of parks and lakes Your family and friends
Rest and reflection	John Smith Come sit with me and rest awhile Brisk walks, wistful talks Rest easy Jane Smith and family
Family remembrance	John Smith Loving husband, father, and grandfather Remembered always
Celebrating a view	John Smith Living, loving the lake and this view
Welcoming message	Good people are always welcome John Smith
Place-based wording	Meet you on the pier John E. Smith From all the family
Enjoying the park	For friends and strollers alike To sit and enjoy the passing scene John Smith
Peace and beauty	Rest awhile and cherish The peacefulness and beauty John, Jane, and Junior Smith
Inspirational quotation	“Man must do good to his fellow man” John Smith ...see you

Bench & Tree Donation Program

Standard Tree Species for Donation Program

Species	Approx. height	Approx. spread
Hackberry	70 ft	60 ft
Ivory Silk Lilac	25 ft	15 ft
Little Leaf Linden	50 ft	25 ft
Amur Maple	20 ft	15 ft
Red Maple	70 ft	40 ft
Sugar Maple	70 ft	40 ft
Bur Oak	65 ft	65 ft
Red Oak	60 ft	50 ft
White Oak	65 ft	40 ft
Swamp White Oak	50 ft	50 ft
Down Serviceberry	25 ft	10 ft
Autumn Blaze Pear	35 ft	25 ft
Ginkgo / Maidenhair	50 ft	35 ft

The tree species listed above are approved for the Tree Donation Program. If a donor requests a specific species, the City Arborist will make the final decision on whether that species is suitable for the location.