

**City of Seaside**  
**Residential Tree Giveaway Program Policy**

**I. PROGRAM**

The City of Seaside is giving away one (1) tree and one (1) bag of fertilizer free of charge to residents with suitable tree planting conditions. Through this effort, the City hopes to raise awareness about the benefits trees provide and to increase the local tree canopy on private properties. Applications will be accepted until the funds for the program have been expended.

**II. PURPOSE**

This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for the City's Residential Tree Giveaway Program. It will outline the process for planting and caring for a new tree at their residence as a means to increase the City's tree canopy, provide a food source, improve wildlife habitat, help mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as, creating an increased sense of well-being for residents. The Tree Giveaway Program will also advance environmental equity, instill a sense of belonging, and improve overall health and quality of life for all City residents, as well as visitors.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Resident: a person living within the city limits of Seaside that has verifiable proof of residency. This could include; drivers license with current address, CA ID card with current address, or official mail such as billing statement from a utility provider.
- B. Tree: for purposes of a free tree giveaway program the trees selected will be free from systemic pesticide treatment and native to our region whenever possible. A selection list of these tree types will be determined by City staff and/or Partners and Collaborators to choose from.
- C. Tree Planting Educator: a person designated by the City with knowledge and competency on tree planting and care matters.
- D. Tree Planting and Care Workshop: a short workshop given by a designated Tree Planting Educator.
- E. Tree Maintenance and Protection Policy: the city policy establishing guidelines and procedures needed to provide for the maintenance, care and protection of trees in order to promote the health, safety, welfare and quality of life for all City residents and visitors.
- F. Partners & Collaborators: a person(s), entity or business that the City collaborates with in implementing and managing a tree planting program
- G. Recreation Director: the Recreation Director or his designated staff
- H. Maintenance & Utilities Superintendent: the Staff in charge of city parks or his designated staff.
- I. Tree Voucher: A Tree Voucher for a local nursery will be given to eligible applicants after review of application and residency is verified.

- J. Communications & Community Engagement Specialist: under general direction of the City Manager or her/his designee, to produce, promote, manage, implement and coordinate communications, public relations, marketing and media outreach activities for the City utilizing a variety of innovative tools and mechanisms; lead the City to develop and implement the City's online and social media presence and interactive outreach strategy; and to do related work as required announcements at CC meetings and on the city's website.
- K. Tree Planting Permit Fee Waiver: a waiver to the City's existing tree planting permit fee. The tree planting permit fee would be waived for all tree giveaway programs in order to have a successful tree giveaway result and one of the program's goals of providing a free tree to residents who may not otherwise be able to afford the tree or the tree planting fee.
- L. Tree Giveaway Application: a required online application form (unless special circumstances determined by Recreation Director require a hard copy form) to apply for a free tree along with information on the requirements to receive a free tree and responsibilities of caring for it.

#### **IV. TREE BENEFITS**

Trees provide a myriad of environmental and community benefits because of the ecosystem services they provide such as: filtering air pollution including particulate matter, producing oxygen, sequestering carbon dioxide, providing shade, regulating temperatures (cooler ambient air), absorbing and retaining water runoff/storm water runoff, improving water quality, reducing erosion, providing beauty, improving physical and mental health, providing food and habitat for wildlife, and increasing nearby property values. Trees reduce heating and air conditioning (HVAC) loads which decreases energy consumption and reduces costs for building occupants. Additionally, the more tree species populating an area increases urban biodiversity and builds local resilience against tree-related pests and disease.

#### **V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The Tree Giveaway Program is open to all Seaside residents with suitable tree planting conditions. All participants will be required to provide address on the application form, and show proof of that address to receive a tree voucher.

#### **VI. APPLICATION PROCESS**

- A. Determine which type of tree you would like to request.

Because species availability fluctuates, the city asks that you submit your first choice and second choice on the application form. The City's Tree Giveaway program will be limited to the following types of trees: Fruit Bearing & Native Species. Exhibit A of this policy is a list of Native Species that are available for you to evaluate and determine which one suits your home. Please make sure to make first and alternative selections. Each species name provides a link to read more in-depth about the tree. The provided list notes each species' characteristics, preferred site conditions, sun exposure, water rating, canopy size at maturity, native tree status, and type(s) of wildlife it will attract.

- B. Complete and submit the application to reserve your tree.

The City requires you to complete the Tree Giveaway Program application form. Included on the form, all participants are required to agree to the Tree Steward Pledge and the Waiver of Tree Liability. Upon submission, staff will confirm the applicant's address is located in the City of Seaside.

Link to [application form](#)

- C. Receive your Voucher to pick up your tree and bag of fertilizer

After application is approved by the City, participants will receive a voucher to be used at (Hana Gardens, 1177 San Pablo Ave, Seaside) – Note trees available at the nurseery may vary from the time application was submitted.

## **VII. TREE STEWARD PLEDGE**

Experts agree that a newly planted tree typically needs one year for each inch in diameter of the trunk to regain a normal root system. For example, a three-inch diameter newly planted tree will need at least three years in the ground to become fully established.

I pledge to plant my tree using the best practices videos on the City's website, paying special attention to site placement, using the tree's root flare to determine proper planting depth, and potential conflicts and/or conditions that may affect the tree's health as it establishes and grows into maturity.

I pledge to water my tree regularly (10-15 gallons per week for a period of up to five years) to help it fully establish and grow strong.

I pledge to maintain a watering basin at the base of my tree and I will keep this area mulched and free of debris, grass, and other plants.

I pledge to keep my tree properly staked for a period of two years before removing them so its trunk doesn't slant while its roots are growing and forming a strong foundation.

I pledge to monitor the health of my tree and will contact an ISA certified arborist for tree expert guidance, as necessary.

I pledge to hire an ISA certified arborist to prune my tree, as necessary, to ensure it has a strong, central trunk, evenly spaced branches, and a balanced canopy.

## **VIII. YOUNG TREE CARE BEST PRACTICES**

All great trees start small! Below are educational videos to learn more about young tree care best practices. All participants will receive this information again at tree pick up. Typically a tree's average lifespan can exceed 50 years with some remarkable species living long beyond 100 years. Much of a tree's success and development is determined in its first five-years during a period referred to as young tree establishment. During this time, the tree is spreading critical roots and branches, adapting to environmental conditions (like water availability), and gaining stability from interactions with winds and storms/drought. Therefore, young tree care activities are essential – like supplemental watering, prune training, temporary staking, and mulching. Note: Many of these can taper to as-needed activities after it is established.

[Tree Watering Guide](#) (published by California Urban Forests Council): Drought conditions are extending the establishment period for young trees in Southern California.

[Tree Planting Guide](#) (published by Texas A&M Forest Service): Comprehensive guide that reviews planning before you plant a tree, knowing what to avoid, and planting and maintenance activities.

[Right Tree, Right Place](#) (published by Arbor Day Foundation): A proper landscape plan takes each tree into consideration – height, mature canopy spread, species debris (deciduous/evergreen and fruit), form/shape, growth rate, growing requirements (soil, sun, and moisture), and hardiness zone.

## **IX. TREE PLANTING**

- A. For the best possible outcome for your tree. It is highly recommend that prior to the pickup and planting of your tree, you attend one of the tree planting demonstration days that are held at a local park. Dates, times, and location for these planting demonstrations will be posted on the City website [www.ci.seaside.ca.us](http://www.ci.seaside.ca.us). If you cannot attend one of the demonstration days, please review the videos located on the Tree Giveaway page on the City's website.
- B. Consideration of your planting location is extremely important. Carefully think about the location of your underground utilities such as; water, sewer, electrical, and gas lines. Tree roots can be destructive to these underground utilities. Your tree should not be planted closer than 5 feet behind the back of the sidewalk as tree roots can also cause the sidewalk to raise which would cause a slip and trip hazard. It is, always recommended that you call 811 before you dig to ensure the location of your underground utilities.

## Exhibit A

### Native Tree List

#### 1. Toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia)

Toyon is a beautiful perennial shrub native throughout the western part of California and the Sierra foothills. It is a prominent component of the coastal sage scrub plant community, and is a part of drought-adapted chaparral and mixed oak woodland habitats. It is also known by the common names Christmas berry and California Holly from the bright red berries it produces. The city of Hollywood was named for this plant.

It often grows to about 8 feet tall, but there are some spectacular specimens in the Los Padres National Forest that are over 30 feet tall. Its leaves are evergreen, alternate, sharply toothed, and are 5 cm in length and 2 cm wide. In the early summer it produces small white flowers 6mm diameter in dense bunches, the five petals are rounded. The fruit is small, bright red and berry-like, produced in large quantities, maturing in the fall and persisting well into the winter. The flowers are visited by butterflies and other insects, and have a mild, hawthorn-like scent. The berries are consumed by birds, including mockingbirds, American robins, and cedar waxwings. Mammals including coyotes and bears also eat and disperse the berries.

Toyon berries are acidic and astringent, and contain a small amount of cyanogenic glycosides, which break down into hydrocyanic acid on digestion. This is removed by mild cooking. Raw berries are mealy, astringent and acid, though were eaten fresh, or mashed into water to make a beverage by Native Americans.

Toyons are beautiful plants and easy to grow. If properly situated, they can grow very quickly, up to 10 feet in three years. They like sun or part shade, though they tend to do better in part shade in the southern, drier part of their geographic range. They can handle a wide variety of soils, including clay, sand and serpentine, but need more moisture than most chaparral shrubs. They do well near seasonal creeks, seeps, bottom of slopes, or near irrigated areas. These plants tolerate a fair amount of summer water, up to 1x per week if the drainage is good. Toyon can be planted near houses since they are fire retardant when given enough moisture. They are an excellent hedge plant.

#### 2. California Wax Myrtle (Morella californica)

California Wax Myrtle (*Morella californica*) is a native shrub in the Myracaceae (Myrtle) family that is found primarily along the coast in northern and central California, although it does occur as far south as Los Angeles County and as far north as British Columbia. It is moderately fast growing and long-lived. It grows in an upright form to a height of 33 feet, with active growth during the spring and summer. Flowers are yellow and bloom in the early summer. Leaves are lanceolate, dark green, and remain on the plant throughout the year. It tends to grow in dunes, hills and woodlands at elevations from sea level to 2,000 ft. This species makes an excellent

small garden tree, especially in coastal gardens or inland if given slightly more moisture and afternoon shade. The wildlife this species supports are a variety of butterflies & moths.

### **3. Hollyleaf Cherry (Prunus ilicifolia)**

Hollyleaf cherry or Evergreen cherry is a species in the Rosaceae (Rose) family that is native to coastal California and northern Baja California. It is an evergreen shrub or small tree up to 15 meters tall, with dense, sclerophyllous foliage. The leaves are 1.6-12 centimeter long with a 4-25 millimeter petiole and spiny margins, somewhat resembling those of the holly, hence its English name; they are dark green when mature and generally shiny on top, and have a smell resembling almonds when crushed. The flowers are small (1-5 millimeters), white, produced on racemes in the spring. The fruit is a cherry 12-25 millimeter diameter, edible and sweet, but contains little flesh surrounding the smooth seed. Great for birds, butterflies and small mammals.

There are two recognized subspecies; ssp. *lyonii* (commonly known as Catalina Island Cherry) is native to the Channel Islands. It was formerly considered a separate species, and it is very similar in appearance and genetics to other *P. ilicifolia*. They hybridize readily, and many plants sold in nurseries may be unintentional hybrids.

### **4. California Lilac (Ceanothus, Ray Hartman)**

Ray Hartman Ceanothus is a cultivated hybrid of *Ceanothus arboreus* and *Ceanothus griseus*. It originated by chance in 1929 at the Leonard Coates Nurseries in Morgan Hill, CA, and is now widely grown in nurseries throughout California. It has dark green glossy leaves, and grows quickly up to 15 feet in height and 10 feet in width. Its blue flowers range from powder blue to dark blue.

Ray Hartman Ceanothus is one of the easiest to grow of all the *Ceanothus* cultivars in California. In general, it's best to grow *Ceanothus* species native to your area. Ray Hartman Ceanothus may be the exception that proves the rule. While its parents are native to the channel islands and the coast of north-central California, it grows reliably throughout the state in both coastal and interior areas, as long as temperatures stay above 10-15 degrees, It tolerates fairly dry soil and naturalizes well in areas with just a little more than average soil moisture during the dry season, such as slope bottoms and north facing slopes. It also tolerates supplemental irrigation up to once per week, though still better not to water directly during the summer or early fall once established or it'll likely have a shortened life. It will get all the water it needs as it stretches its roots out to nearby irrigated areas.

The biggest problem with this plant is that deer love it. Rats also seem to be attracted to this plant and can strip smaller branches and shoots to make their nests.

### **5. Fruit Trees**

All fruit bearing trees such as; all variety of citrus, apple/pear, or stone fruit are available.