

# Planting the right-of-way the right way



The adage of “right plant, right place” is critical in the right-of way where sight lines and safety come first! Seattle requires that **plants within 30 feet of an intersection not exceed 24-inches tall** (except for approved street trees). This includes traffic circle garden plants. Trees should be limbed up for visibility, as they grow. Keeping plants within these limitations may be a challenging chore, but it is important that you check your circle on a regular basis to prune back any plants that may obscure visibility. If shrubs or plants within the circle you are caring for tend to be rambunctious, and you find yourself constantly trimming back the overgrowth, you may want to consider replacing them with vegetation that matures at a more acceptable height.

To find a recommended plant list and maintenance tips, check out this link:

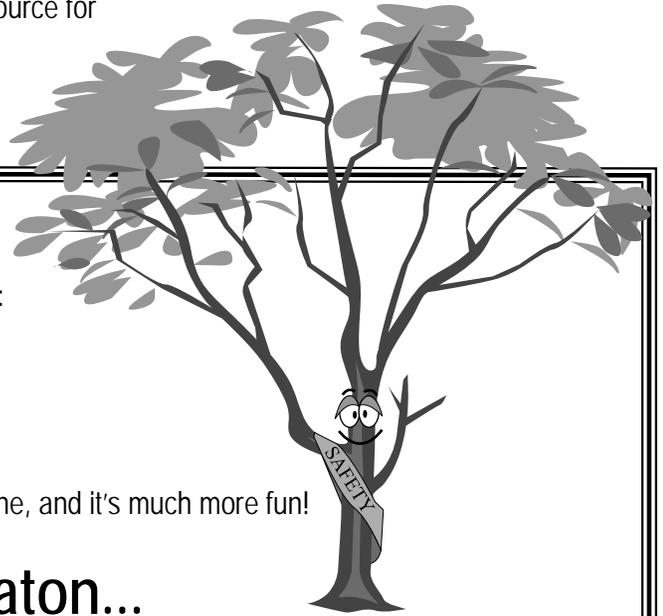
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/trafficcircles.htm#landscape>

If the circle you live near appears a “little worse for wear,” there is also a link to the Department of Neighborhoods website where you can get information about neighborhood matching grants; a great resource for helping fund vegetation rehabilitation.

## Safety First

While maintenance of a traffic circle is important, your safety is even more important! The following tips may seem instinctive, but remember:

- Wear highly visible clothing when working in the circle.
- Keep an eyes and ears open for approaching cars.
- Look before crossing the street.
- Wear gloves when working with sharp tools, especially pruners!
- Work with a partner(s) – two sets of eyes and ears are better than one, and it’s much more fun!



## Going to Seed? Pass the Baton...

*Have you moved or lost interest in and energy for traffic circle maintenance? When initially installed, neighborhoods enter into an agreement with SDOT to maintain traffic circles. If the traffic circle near you is currently untended, perhaps you know of a neighbor who would be interested in taking over gardening duties, or would like to share the task. Well-tended circles enhance the beauty of the neighborhood and help assure good visibility. Alternatively, your neighborhood may request that a circle be paved over.*

## Oh no!



Although the intent for traffic circles is to calm traffic, sometimes cars run over or through the circle damaging trees and/or plant materials beyond repair. If possible, try to get a vehicle license plate number and ask to file a police report. Then call SDOT Urban Forestry (684-TREE) with an incident number. The city of Seattle may be able to collect damages, which will help re-vegetate circles.

## Circle of Support

Replacement plants for traffic circles are typically not available if the originals die due to neglect or automobile run-overs. What is a circle gardener to do?



Consider joining Plant Amnesty - Members have access to a list of donated plants. <http://www.plantamnesty.org/board.htm>

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) - Loads of information on smart watering, composting, drought tolerant plant selections <http://www.seattle.gov/util/services>



Watch for plant sales in the area. Check out the Arboretum Foundation website for a list of sale events: [http://www.arboretumfoundation.org/plant\\_sales/plant\\_sales.cfm](http://www.arboretumfoundation.org/plant_sales/plant_sales.cfm)

# Look at this!



## What is a plant exchange?

Share your plentiful plants with other circle gardeners! If your perennial plants are looking crowded, are becoming spindly or are producing smaller and fewer flowers, they may need to be "split." If you are splitting plants this fall, consider bringing some extras to the plant exchange. You will be sharing those plants that are plentiful in your circle and may be able to pick up a new variety from other stewards. You will also get a chance to network with fellow traffic circle volunteers.

## How does it work?

Bring several of your extra plants to share, go home with new varieties that others bring to share.

**BRING:** Your extra plants, your questions, ideas and enthusiasm!

The event is **FREE** to traffic circle volunteers.

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City of Seattle 

# You're invited!

Join us for a  
**TRAFFIC CIRCLE VOLUNTEER PLANT EXCHANGE**

**WHEN:** Saturday, October 27th  
10am - noon  
**WHERE:** Magnuson Park Brig, Building 406  
The Matthews Beach Room  
6344 NE 74th Street

**Director Grace Crunican** of the Seattle Department of Transportation will welcome volunteers to the event

**EXPERTS** will be on hand to discuss plant selections, maintenance and more!

**FREE** plants, bulbs, mulch and trees!

**DOOR PRIZES** and other gifts for those who attend

*Please RSVP by October 19th so we know how many folks to expect.  
call 684-5047 and leave a message or email us at [seattle.trees@seattle.gov](mailto:seattle.trees@seattle.gov)*

