

September/October 2020

LIGHT Reading

KEEP COOL NEXT SUMMER, PLANT A TREE THIS FALL

After another hot summer, you might be thinking of ways to keep cooler next summer. Planting strategically sited trees can help cool your home and improve its energy efficiency.

Trees have many benefits. They reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, increase property values, and can promote health. A deciduous tree—one that drops its leaves in the winter—planted on the west side of your home can shade your home in the summer and allow for the sun's rays to warm it in the winter. The tree's shading and cooling benefits increase as it grows larger. An energy efficient home with two 25-foot-tall trees shading its west side is cooler and more comfortable in the summer, and the trees may reduce summer cooling costs.

For tree shading in our area, west is best. Make sure to plant trees away from power lines and call 8-1-1 before you dig. Planting trees in your planting strip requires a free permit from the Seattle Department of Transportation. For permit information and a list of appropriately sized trees to plant near power lines, see the Seattle Department of Transportation's online Street Tree Manual, available via this web page: seattle.gov/trees/planting-and-care/street-trees.



FINANCES IMPACTED BY COVID-19? WE CAN HELP.

City Light offers a variety of resources to help customers who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We aren't disconnecting anyone for nonpayment during this trying time, and we have payment options and assistance programs for those that need them.

If your finances are strained, please get in touch with us so we can work out a payment plan by calling (206) 684-3000 or sending an email 24/7 at seattle.gov/utilities/about-us/email-question.

Get a full list of utility bill assistance programs and other community resources at <https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2020/03/18/covid-19-resources>.

BEWARE SCAM CALLS

City Light will never call demanding immediate payment over the phone. If you are contacted by someone threatening to shut off your service if you don't pay immediately, they are trying to scam you. End the conversation right away and call us at (206) 684-3000 or visit seattle.gov/light/endscams to report the scam attempt. For more information, visit seattle.gov/light/endscams.



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THIS FALL, HARVEST THESE TIPS

As the days grow shorter and the nights get cooler, our tendency is to crank up the heat, turn on the oven, and reach for the pumpkin spice! When your finances are limited, it's smart to look for new ways to stay cozy without driving up your electric bill. Here are some tips to help you save this season.

- Use lighting strategically. Directional table lamps and other task lighting options can focus illumination where you need it, and even eliminate the need for general lighting. Outdoor and security lighting can be made more efficient with sensors or timers, so they're only on when they're needed.
- Locate and reduce drafts. Nothing can disrupt a comfy spot like a draft, and air leakage can be responsible for up to a third of your heating costs! Consider conducting a visual evaluation of your home, looking for light coming through openings as an indicator of air leakage. Low-cost remedies could include installing weather-stripping on windows and doorways, installing plastic storm window kits, and applying caulk around window frames inside the home.
- Use hot water wisely. It may be tempting to warm up with a hot bath, but did you know that water heating is the second-largest user of energy in a home after heating and cooling? Stick to reasonably short showers and consider purchasing a low-flow showerhead.
- Prepare your heating system. Now's the time to dust off the baseboards or replace the filters on your heating system. Well-maintained heating systems work more efficiently and are less prone to breaking down. Don't let furniture, drapes and other household items prevent your heating system from getting heat where it's needed.



Seattle City Light crews are in these neighborhoods, working to provide reliable service:

- Arroyo/South Arbor Heights: installing underground conduits, vaults and streetlights to replace aging infrastructure;
- Chinatown-International District: upgrading underdeck light fixtures to LEDs at several freeway overpass locations;
- Downtown Seattle: installing underground duct banks to increase reliability for the downtown electrical system;
- Service Territory: replacing aging utility poles throughout the service area to enhance safety and reliability;
- Southwest Seattle: improving communications between several utility substations by replacing overhead fiberoptic cables.

This is a partial list. For details go to seattle.gov/light/atwork to access our map and learn about individual projects.



SAFETY TIP FROM THE FIELD

"When working outdoors around your home, remember to look up and check for wires. Keep tall ladders, roofing materials and pruning equipment clear of overhead power lines to avoid a hazardous situation. If you're planning on doing work close to a power line, call City Light at 684-3000 and schedule a temporary disconnect for your safety."



700 Fifth Avenue
PO Box 34023
Seattle, WA 98124-4023

Questions, comments or suggestions? Call **(206) 684-3000**.
Editor: Tony White, tony.white@seattle.gov

Newsletter available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, Tagalog and Korean online or call **(206) 684-3000**.

