



ROOTS &
SHOOTS
ARBORCARE

August 20, 2026

City of Hendersonville
160 6th Ave. East
Hendersonville, NC 28792
(828) 697-3000

To whom it may concern,

The Honey Locust trees located between 3rd and 5th Avenue along Main Street have become more costly to maintain each year. They suffer from Armored Scales, Honey Locust Plant Bugs, and Spider Mites, the latter of which have proven especially difficult to manage in an urban environment. Since I have been helping Bill Leatherwood, arborist and owner of Leatherwood Wildland Management, maintain the street trees about a decade ago, we have implemented every modality of treatment known for these trees. Initially, we tried using only cultural control methods outlined under the principles of Integrated Pest Management before moving on to chemical control. Since then, we have used a variety of control methods over the years with limited success and struggle to maintain canopy through the end of the Apple Festival each year. They have been soil drenched using systemic insecticide, foliar sprayed using Horticultural Oil in both dormant and growing seasons multiple times a year, as well as individually trunk injected using miticide with tree IV equipment.

It is therefore my recommendation that these trees be removed and replaced over the next few years in an effort to reduce costs for the city and the unnecessary use of expensive chemical treatments. Because most pests are species-specific, monoculture tree stands are highly vulnerable to outbreaks that quickly spread from host to host. To mitigate this risk, I recommend **alternating species** for the new replacements.

This plan follows guidelines set forth under ANSI A300 Part 6 standards Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management (Planting and Transplanting) by the International Society of Arboriculture and published by the Tree Care Industry Association.

Phase 1 – Recommended Removals

There are (30) Honey Locusts in total, (13) of which are located on the 300 block, and (17) located on the 400 block of Main Street. Removals and replacements should be done incrementally over several years in an effort to maintain some semblance of shade for the businesses and patrons of the shops along Main Street.

Phase 2 – Planting Specifications

Safety

The locations of utilities and other obstructions both below and above ground shall be taken into consideration prior to planting and removal operations. Utilities and other obstructions include, but are not limited to, gas electric, communications, sewer, drainage, and signage.

Site Inspections

The site should be assessed prior to planting for suitability. Soil at the installation site should be analyzed and tested for pH, structure, texture, density, nutrients, and percolation. Drainage should be adequate for the species being planted. Soil amendments should be made prior to planting as well.

Plant Quality

Plants or nursery stock with significant defects may not be considered acceptable candidates for planting. Prior to purchasing the replacements, general health including foliage color and density, signs of insect and disease, and past care should be assessed. Check the general structural condition including the root system, present defects, past injuries, crown shape, and growing environment.

Planting Hole

Trees that are planted too deeply are a common health concern and shall be avoided. The depth of the planting hole shall not exceed the height of the root ball, which is measured from the bottom of the trunk flare to the bottom of the ball. The soil beneath the root ball should be undisturbed or prepared to prevent settling. The planting hole width should be a minimum of 1.5 times the diameter of the root ball. The sides of the planting hole should be loose.

Installation

Circling or kinked roots should be straightened or severed and the root system should be evenly distributed in the planting hole radiating away from the trunk. The bottom of the trunk flare shall be at or above the finished grade. All fabric and wire baskets shall be removed from the planting hole prior to backfilling. Backfilling should be similar to the soil at the planting site or amended not to exceed 10% by volume. Water should be added to the root zone and surrounding soil to bring the root zone to field capacity. Double-ground hardwood mulch shall be applied near, but not touching, the trunk out to the perimeter of the planting between 2 and 4 inches deep. Trees requiring support shall use a tie which does not damage the trunk tissue of the plant and shall be removed within 1 calendar year from the planting date.

Aftercare Practices

Post-planting care should be considered for a minimum of 1 calendar year from the planting date, but ideally through establishment (generally 3 years, although large caliper trees can require 5-9 years). Care should consist of the following: soil moisture management (watering program), mulching, integrated pest management, pruning, monitoring, soil management (fertilization), and maintenance/removal of support systems (arbor tie and stakes once established).

Another Word on Watering

Watering is critical during the first years of a newly planted tree or shrub, not only for survival, but also to ensure it is vigorous enough to defend against pest and fungal problems. Insect pests most commonly target weakened or stressed plants and those which are planted in an urban environment are nearly always under some sort of stress. The heat that radiates from the pavement, mowers and string trimmers damaging the trunks, and lack of mycorrhizal networks all contribute to shorter life spans of urban trees and shrubs.

The general rule for watering is 5 gallons per caliper inch at least weekly during the summer and fall, and times of drought. If hand watering is not likely to be done, the use of Treegator bags or a similar type of watering bladder, which allows for slow saturation of the root zone over a several hour period should be used. This ensures the soil is adequately moist, while not drowning the plant by a flood of water, which will most likely run off.

Recommended Replacements

Fringetree – *Chioanthus virginicus*
Carolina Silverbell – *Halesia carolina*
Yellowwood – *Cladrastis kentukea*
Sourwood – *Oxydendrum arboreum*

Eastern Hophornbeam – *Ostrya virginiana*
American Hornbeam – *Carpinus caroliniana*
Dwarf Chinkapin Oak – *Quercus prinoides*
Sassafras – *Sassafras albidum*

I strongly recommend alternating species rather than replanting a monoculture. Some of the Honey Locusts may even be able to remain by the end of the removal/replanting cycle since thinning the stand may lead to improved health and insect management. While not an exhaustive list, these trees typically do well in our area and offer a range of diversity throughout the seasons. The spaces provided along Main Street are of minimal size and not adequate for very large growing trees, which will have to be constantly pruned in order to fit into the space, or may eventually interfere with city infrastructure and vehicles.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need further details.

Kindest Regards,



Joe Weaver
Certified Arborist SO-10200A
Tree Risk Assessment Qualified

