

The Camp Springs Quality of Life Committee  
5606 Chesterfield Drive  
Camp Springs, MD 20748



Tree and Landscape Management Report



**Date:** June 30, 1996

**Subdivision:** Westchester Estates

**Copies to:** The [names deleted] households.

**Prepared by:** Alexander Gabis Jr.

**Area covered:** Northeast corner of Chesterfield and Westchester Drives, including properties at 5604, 5606, and 5610 Chesterfield and 7212, 7214, and 7216 Westchester.

**General Remarks:**

Because of the proximity of the park, this corner is one of the greenest in the subdivision. The wooded areas along nearby Tinkers Creek provide a green vista from April to October. In addition, many of the landscape trees in the six properties surveyed are as old as the development itself - 30 to 35 years. With so many mature trees growing within a relatively small area (roughly three acres), a park-like setting is created. The stand of Maples, Oaks and Pines at the back end of the neighboring properties to the north (7115, 7117 Westhaven and 7210 Westchester) provides a tall, green backdrop - framing the lawns, shrubs and flower beds with a soft curtain of lush vegetation that is also attractive to birds.

Walking into any one of the six backyards, you get a feeling of open intimacy. There are no tall structures, fences or walls separating the properties. A few carefully placed shrubs and trees serve to distinguish one yard from the next, while at the same time open lawns, garden paths and gates provide connections between them. The overall effect is that of a wooded sanctuary: private, but not solitary. This works well here since all of the residents are clearly conscientious about maintaining the landscape.

The front side of the homes on this corner is also well maintained. The 5600 block of Chesterfield and the 7200 block of Westchester have tall trees spaced evenly along the curb - roughly two per property. The lower branches of most of these trees have been pruned fairly high up the trunk, so that the homes and foundation plantings behind them are visible. The trees serve to frame the homes, rather than obscure them. The lawns in front are open and well maintained. Evergreens, shrubs and flower beds are prominent. The mixture of sun and shade on the front yards is good. Homes on Chesterfield have a southeast exposure, while those on Westchester face southwest.

## **Recommendations:**

### 1. Remove or replace Silver Maples

There are 58 trees in the survey of the six properties (see map), including 10 trees that are located in adjacent yards. Of those, half - 29 - are Maples, and of the Maples, 17 are Silver Maples. The Silver Maple is 60 to 80 feet tall at maturity, and can easily grow more than 100 feet. It is fast growing, with a wide-spreading crown (50 feet), brittle branches and a shallow root system.

Furthermore, it is not a long-lived tree. Because of its size and shallow roots, it is not the best choice for a garden landscape tree. Some of the Silver Maples here are already well-established, and should stay where they are. Most, however, have not yet grown to full size, and it would be fairly easy to replace them with a tree more suitable for the location. If left untended, the 17 Silver Maples on these properties would eventually grow so large that they would create heavy shade over a wide area, and their extensive root systems would make it difficult for even grass to grow below them. There is a wide variety of small trees and large shrubs that would serve quite well as replacements for some of the Silver Maples here.

### 2. Manage trees for more light

This landscape presently has a good balance of sun and shade, but it won't be long before shade will start dominating. In some spots trees have already grown large enough to significantly affect the amount of sunlight that reaches the ground. The map shows areas of shade at approximately 10:15 A.M. on the 21st of June - 4 1/2 hours after sunrise on the longest day of the year. By turning the shadows 180 degrees, you can see where the shadows would lie at 4:15 P.M. Areas between those two extents would receive roughly six hours of sunlight on June 21st. Most flowering plants, herbs, annuals and vegetables require a minimum of six hours of sunlight, and will not do well with less than that.

Replacing large trees with smaller trees or shrubs is one way to increase the light. I've indicated on the map some of the candidates for replacement. Another possibility is to "limb-up" trees (i.e., prune the lower limbs) so that light can come in under the canopy. Also, a tree service can be called in to do a "clean-out". In a clean-out, a technician climbs into the tree and selectively removes a number of smaller branches. Dappled light can then penetrate through the crown. Finally, you can "bonsai" some trees - keep them severely pruned so that they never get very tall.

Virtually all of the trees in the survey could stand some degree of limbing-up or cleaning-out. The exceptions are the Dogwoods, which should not be pruned at all, and the Spruces, which require a somewhat different kind of trimming. The maples along the street should be limbed-up not just to allow more light to penetrate, but also for aesthetic reasons. Prune lower

limbs high enough up the trunk so that the houses behind are visible. The higher the they are pruned, the better they look. A high canopy of tall graceful trees adorning a block adds character to the street.

### 3. Remove or prune trees that pose a hazard to buildings

There are two trees that should be pruned, three more that need to be monitored, and one that should be taken down completely for safety reasons. The two Red Maples between 7214 and 7216 Westchester overhang a carport and tool sheds. The larger one has already lost a couple of big limbs and both trees could use some judicious pruning. The trees that should be watched are the Tulip Poplar in front of 5604, the Sycamore in front of 5606, and the Silver Maple to the rear of 5610 Chesterfield. These trees can certainly grow large enough to eventually overhang the nearby houses. The one tree that should be taken down soon is the Pin Oak at the east corner of 7216 Westchester. With its trunk growing within a few feet of the house, this large Oak will no doubt drop a limb or two on the roof someday if it's allowed to grow to maturity.

### 4. Perform selective root pruning

The soil is heavy, compacted, and rocky - especially in the areas close to foundations and driveways. The poor soil combined with shallow roots, creates a zone of root competition close to the surface where the thin layer of humus is located. Because of this, tree roots spread very wide - far wider than the drip-line of the trees. The shallow-rooted Red and Silver Maples are particularly prone to this habit. The root competition causes lawns and flower beds below the trees to suffer, especially during the hot months of the year. Where it's possible to do so, a careful, selective pruning of some of these wide-spreading tree roots will benefit the rest of the landscape without hurting the tree. The growth of the tree can be "managed" with a combination of pruning, root pruning, fertilization, and adequate watering. All of the trees near the curb should be managed this way, as should the larger trees growing near flower and vegetable beds.