

HPA Air Spading

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The red line indicates the original soil height

Over Winter break, the tree team engaged in a tree revitalization initiative at the Health and Public Affairs south tree colonnade. This area is scheduled for an upcoming landscape makeover and pivotal to the plan is maintaining a healthy, luscious, green canopy cover. As is common with many trees in urban settings, unnatural (and sometimes natural) environmental factors can stress trees in these areas and lead to their decline and eventual removal.

Upon inspection of the landscape, it came to our attention that several of the Laurel Oaks present in the colonnade were in serious decline and lacked vibrant foliage. After some investigatory work, the tree team concluded it might be possible to stimulate growth by invigorating root aeration and gas exchange.

After repeated, routine mulching over time a layer of compacted, decomposing debris and fresh mulch had piled up around the root flare of the stressed trees. The root flare is the base of the trunk, an area critical to vascular conduction of water and nutrients for the entire tree. When this area becomes constricted or buried it reduces the trees ability to nourish itself and fend off pathogens, some of which can enter through the covered flare from the soil.

When the team excavated the root flare, they found it buried under almost 2 feet of caked and decomposing mulch!