



Arbor Day is a great reminder that any time is a wonderful time to plant a tree. There are lots of choices out there when it comes to selecting a tree. Picking the right one for your situation shouldn't be a daunting task. Find out some tree selecting and planting tips to make sure your tree remains a long-term investment.

There are many options when it comes to methods for growing trees. Bare root, container, root producing containers, balled and burlap, tree spade, the possibilities are endless. Each method has their pros and cons. Bare root trees will need to be soaked for a few hours prior to planting. Inspect container grown nursery stock by removing the pot. Look to see if there are many circling roots. If the tree is completely root bound, pass on that tree, it is a lost cause. Root producing containers are 'new' in the industry. The difference between these containers and conventional nursery containers is when a root reaches the edge of the pot, instead of circling around, it stops and branches out. These types of containers can produce more roots and really decrease the chances of circling roots. Balled and burlap (B&B) trees are trees that are cut out of the ground then have burlap and a wire basket placed over the root system. When planting these types of trees, remember to remove both the wire basket and the burlap from the root ball. Trees moved with a tree spade are popped out of the ground in one location and popped into the ground in another.

Keep in mind, bigger is not always better. If you select a bigger container grown tree, you have to dig a bigger hole. B&B trees and those moved with a tree spade will need to regrow their root systems that were lost in the move. For every inch in trunk diameter, is approximately how many years the tree will sit in grown re-growing its root system. So a 3" diameter tree will take about 3 years to reestablish its root system before it begins to actively grow, a 6" diameter will take about 6 years and so on. Ideally 1" or up to 1.5" diameter tree gives you a big enough tree, yet small enough to begin actively growing quickly.

Having a properly placed tree in a properly dug hole will pay off in the long run. The location of the tree planting is key. Select a location where the tree can reach its mature size and not be obstructed by other objects like power lines or buildings. Be sure to call the city's utility department and Diggers Hotline at least 3 days prior to planting. This is to ensure that you won't cut any underground like when digging the hole. If you have an underground sprinkler system, the lines and sprinkler heads are also handy to have marked. Once you have selected a spot to place the tree. Stand in that spot and look for potential issues. Look up and down. Are there any power lines or obstructions up high? Do the spot drain well or does it pool water? If you look out the window of the house, will the mature tree block any sight lines that you want to maintain?

Dig a million dollar hole for a \$10 tree. If you are going to invest in quality nursery stock, it needs to be placed the proper planting hole for best success. Once you have selected the site and done your homework to make sure it is the best location for the tree, let the digging can begin. You don't have to dig a deep hole to plant a tree. You want to make the hole as deep as the plant is potted or deep enough that the flare roots, the first set of roots, are near the soil surface. Make the hole like a shallow dish rather than a deep hole. Roots need oxygen in order for the tree to grow properly. If the tree is planted too deep, it is not able to receive enough oxygen and the tree won't be able to reach its full potential.

Water for newly planted trees is just as important as a properly placed plant. Aim for the tree to get 1 gallon of water per 1" of diameter every day for two weeks, then every other day for 2 weeks. A 2" diameter tree would get about 2 gallons of water per watering, a 3" about 3 gallons, and so on. Throughout the rest of the growing season, try to get around 1" of water per week on the trees. Some trees, like balled and burlap or those moved with a tree spade, may need more water if they are larger due to the decreased root zone.

The second best time to plant a tree is today. The best time was yesterday. Consider planting one this year.

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