

Planning for Trees a Must

September and April are the two best tree planting months, though tree spades have lengthened the season quite a bit. Fall planting can be very successful if proper care like watering, mulching, staking are done after planting.

Most container grown and balled and burlaped trees and shrubs sold at garden centers are excellent candidates for fall planting. Nursery plants come with well developed root systems and because the roots of many landscape plants are capable of growing even when soil temperatures cool to 45 degrees F, the prospects for successful plant establishment are quite high throughout the fall season. Conifers, such as pine and spruce, benefit from a slightly earlier start, preferring the warmer soil temperatures (60 degrees to 70 degrees F) common in late summer to early fall (mid-August through September).

Tree selection is one of the most important investment decisions a homeowner makes when landscaping a new home or replacing trees. Most trees outlive the people who plant them. Consequently, it is important to match the tree to the planting site.



Why is the tree being planted?

Do you want the tree to provide shade, fruit, or seasonal color, or act as a windbreak or screen?

What is the size and location of the planting site?

Does the space lend itself to a large, medium, or small tree?

Are there overhead or below ground wires or utilities in the vicinity?

Do you need to consider clearance for sidewalks, patios, driveways and the house or outbuildings?

Are there other trees in the area?

What soil conditions exist?

Properly placed and maintained trees increase real estate value. A large shade tree provides relief from the summer's heat and, when properly placed, can reduce summer cooling costs. An ornamental tree provides beautiful flowers, leaves, bark, or fruit. Evergreens with dense, persistent leaves can provide a windbreak or a screen for privacy. A tree that drops its leaves in the fall allows the sun to warm a house in the winter.

A tree or shrub that produces fruit can provide food for the owner and/or attract birds and wildlife. Trees reduce the glare from pavement, reduce runoff, filter out pollutants, and add oxygen to the air we breathe. Trees also improve the quality of life on our property.

Frank Lloyd Wright, the famous architect, once commented that "form follows function." This is a good rule to remember when selecting a tree. Selecting the right form (shape) to complement the desired function (what you want the tree to do) can reduce maintenance costs and increase the tree's value in the landscape.

When selecting a tree, consider its mature size. Trees grow in a variety of sizes and shapes that will fit the planting space available. Depending on your site restrictions, there are hundreds of combinations of form and size from which to choose.

Diversity in your tree and shrub selections is a key to success. It limits insect and disease attacks and lessens the impact of loss of a tree. Select native or very well adapted species which handle Nebraska conditions well. Generally smaller trees cost less and adapt and grow quicker, they often match or exceed the height of larger plantings in a couple of years.

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