

Tips for Tree Selection and Planting

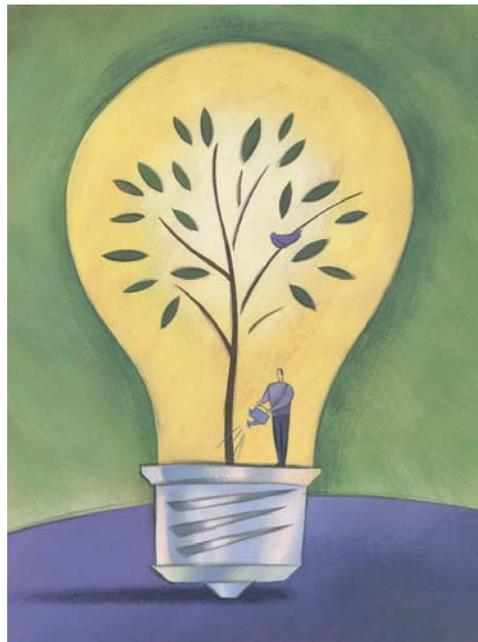
A tree should be selected and located so that it complements the site on which it is planted. Following is a list of tips to consider before you plant your next tree.

1. Consider the size of the area where you want to plant the tree. If you have only a small area in your front yard, you should choose a tree that will remain small. If you are looking to shade your front lawn and house, a larger tree will be more appropriate. Remember that all trees are small when they are first planted. It is important to consider the ultimate size of the tree before you plant it. Talk to your nursery person or consult the Sunset New Western Garden book to help determine the ultimate size of your selection.

2. Consider the proximity of the tree to the house, paved areas such as driveways, sidewalks and patios and underground utilities. Fast, aggressive growers should not be planted near items that may be damaged by roots unless precautions are taken when the tree is planted.

3. Consider the other properties of a tree. Do you want an evergreen or deciduous tree? Deciduous trees are generally faster growing trees. Does the tree you have selected have any fruit, flowers or seed pods that may add to the litter burden in addition to the normal leaf drop?

4. Consider how the tree you plant will relate to your neighbor's property. Will it shade sun-loving plants? Will it overhang and drop litter into their roof gutters? Is it so close to the property line that it may eventually grow onto your neighbor's property?



5. Once you have selected a tree, consult the local nurseries about the container sizes that are available. The standard container sizes vary from 1 gallon, 5 gallon, 15 gallon to specimen sizes such as 24" box, 36" box and larger. Typically a 15 gallon size tree is suitable and easily able to acclimate to its new surroundings.

6. New trees should be staked once they are in the ground. The stake should be pounded deep enough so that it is approximately 2 feet into undisturbed soil. The stake will prevent the rootball from shifting in the ground. Once the fragile feeder roots start to penetrate the surrounding soil, they can be easily broken if the rootball is not stable.

7. If the tree is going to be planted near the house foundation or any paved surface, you may want to consider installing a root barrier. A polyethylene root barrier, which can be found at most local garden supply stores, is very effective at deflecting roots downward and preventing long-term damage.

8. To encourage roots to grow deep, you may want to consider installing a 'deep-watering' tube at the time you plant your tree. This tube may simply consist of a 2-1/2 to 3 foot length of perforated drain pipe installed next to the tree rootball. Fill this tube with any type of drain rock and deep water the tree as recommended by the nursery.

9. Once the tree has become established, take proper care with regular fertilization and trimming.