

PROPER TREE PLANTING

“Plant the right tree in the right place and you can beautify your environment and increase the value of your property” according to the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation. Planting a tree is a lifetime investment that involves many considerations, such as type of tree, planting location, planting procedure, and care of tree after planting. Planning can help ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place. Proper tree selection and placement enhances your property’s value and prevents costly trimming and damage to your home.

Follow these steps when planning to plant a tree.

Planning:

1. Avoid tree and utility conflicts. Look up and down to determine where the tree will be located in relation to overhead and underground utility lines.
2. Choose a tree that will survive in your climate, whose eventual height and width are good in the space you have chosen, a tree that will have the ornamental affects you seek (branching habit, texture and color of bark, flower, fruit). Select for a specific location (e.g. don’t plant a dogwood in full-day sunlight). Accept only well-grown trees from a contractor or nursery. Tree trunk should measure 2 to 3 inches in diameter at a point 6 inches above the eventual ground level. Branches should be well arranged around the tree and without broken branches, and there should not be a double leader.
3. Order your tree early: For fall planting, order by the beginning of July and for spring planting, order by the beginning of February 1. Trees should be planted in its dormant stage – in the fall after leaf drop or in early spring before budding.



Planting:

1. Identify the trunk flare: This is where the trunk expands at the base of the tree. The flare should be visible after the tree has been planted.
2. Dig a shallow, broad hole that is 2 to 3 times wider than the root ball but only as deep as the root ball.
3. Remove the container or cut away the top of the wire basket.
4. Inspect the root ball for circling roots – straighten, cut, or remove them.
5. Place the tree at the proper height. If tree is planted too deep, new roots will have difficulty developing because of lack of oxygen. If too high, roots can dry out.
6. Straighten the tree in the hole. Have a friend view the tree from several directions.
7. Fill the hole gently, but firmly to stabilize it. Pack the soil lightly to eliminate air pockets. Water when the tree is partly planted and again when fully planted to help eliminate air pockets and ensure that the entire root ball has received an adequate amount of water.
8. Stake the tree.
9. Mulch the base of the tree in a donut hole, not a volcano. This will create a basin for watering, moderate soil temperature extremes and reduce grass and weeds.
10. Provide follow-up care. Water thoroughly regularly -- once a week in hot weather. Aim to provide 10 to 20 gallons. Keep moist but not waterlogged.

For information about trees including recommendations for small-growing trees, how to plant trees, pruning tips, or, if you want to be involved with sustainability efforts in town, visit GreenerBloomfield.org or

www.facebook.com/GreenerBloomfield.

