



# TREE NEWS

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YOU CAN USE

## CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

### SELECTING & ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT PLANT

We are inherently drawn to trees, for their aesthetics, their shape, their color, or simply the textures they bring into our landscape. While it may seem as though we are planting a single, isolated tree in the yard, we are actually benefiting the urban forest as a whole. Multiple lines of research show that urban forests make us happier, reduce crime rates, attract wildlife, increase property values, and provide numerous ecosystem services.

Many trees possess both good and bad characteristics, so it is important to take a few considerations into account when selecting new plantings. Carefully inspect trees prior to purchase. Any number of defects may appear in nursery stock, but trees that are free of obvious injuries, diseases, or pests will have a much better chance of long-term survival.

No matter the type of nursery stock you purchase, initial tree establishment is critical for long-term success. Keep in mind that most stress and physiological disorders can often be traced back to poor planting practices. Use caution when moving new trees, protect them from winds when travelling, and ensure adequate water supply until the tree is planted in the ground. When digging a hole for tree establishment, ensure that it is wider, not deeper. A proper planting area should be three-to-five times the width of the root ball itself; the larger the better. When setting the tree into the new planting area, tree roots should be carefully spaced out radially. This not only allows new roots to more easily establish themselves in the newly disturbed soil, but it also reduces the chances of girdling roots forming in the future. By digging out a shallow area that is wider than deeper, we can also better define the correct height to place the root flare, which should exist just above the soil line and allow for any settling post planting. When in doubt, planting a tree too shallow is always going to be better than too deep.

Remember, transplanting and installing trees into a new location is a major operation, and trees are often slow to recover from the move. Close monitoring and an appropriate watering regimen (tailored to your site) will be the key to survival. While the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now... Happy fall planting!



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#### When selecting nursery stock, be on the lookout for:

- Plants free of any obvious trunk or branch injuries
- An absence of girdling roots
- Well-developed trunk tape
- Quality graft unions
- A lack of co-dominant (twin-trunked) stems
- Plants free of diseases or pests
- Correct planting depth in the container
- Newly formed, active growth on the plant

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