

National Arborist Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Proper Tree Planting Provides Years of Healthy Growth

In Spring, when the air warms and suburban greenery starts to bloom, homeowners survey their properties and envision planting trees to enhance the aesthetic and economic value of their landscapes.

There is common belief that anybody who can dig a hole can plant a tree. This is only true if the person planting the tree doesn't care about that tree's long-term health and beauty. Incorrect planting can lead to major structural and nutritional problems for the tree, which can ultimately lead to hazards to human life.

Planting a tree is not as simple as digging a hole large enough to stuff in the root ball. Proper planting involves preparing the entire site. Below are some of the key health determinants homeowners should consider:

Site selection ... Be very particular in considering a planting site. Select an area that is well removed from building structures and electric lines. Visualize the hindrances the tree will encounter after ten, 20 or 30 years of growth.

Tree selection ... Select the tree best suited for the climate in your area and the environmental conditions of the site. Many hybrid and ornamental trees sold to homeowners are at the extreme edge of their survivability zones. For example, some species may only survive if planted in sheltered areas of a property. Seek help from your local university co-operative extension or consult a professional arborist.

Planting techniques ...

Do not plant the tree too deep. If the roots are too far below the surface, they will suffocate or grow upward in an attempt to reach closer to the surface.

Make the hole large enough. Dig a wide planting hole, preferably twice as wide as the root ball.

Loosen the soil around the edges of the hole, which will help the young roots grow outward.

Loosen the soil beyond the dripline of the tree

Avoid making changes to soil unless truly needed. Generally, fertilization is not needed at the time of planting.

Moisten the soil and remove dead branches before you plant. Apply a 3- to 4-inch layer of mulch over the root ball and slightly away from the trunk to help keep soil moist. Do not pile mulch against the trunk and do not apply more than 4 inches deep.

Brace the tree only if needed.

By taking care of your existing trees or planting new trees around your house, you are improving living conditions now and for generations to come.

For information on the care of trees or to search for an arborist in your local area visit the NAA's web site: WWW.NATLARB.COM. The NAA is a 60-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture.