

Arbor Days in April

Finally, the long winter freeze is over! Spring is here and vibrant green plants are popping up everywhere. April brings Arbor Days and Arbor Days bring a tree planting frenzy! Are you prepared to participate?

Why plant trees?

Trees have many [economic and health benefits](#). Mature landscape trees add up to 7% to your home value, making trees an asset to any property! A well-placed tree can provide shade and lower your energy costs to cool your home. Did you know trees are experts at diverting rainwater from our storm sewers? Mature trees intercept thousands of gallons of storm water per year, reducing local stormwater runoff and flooding. In addition, trees provide improved air quality and help our mental health by reducing our daily stress levels.

Location, Location, Location!

Saving money and getting the most benefit out of your trees involves choosing the right location. Planting deciduous trees, trees that lose their leaves, in the correct location can help with both cooling and heating. For maximum benefit, plant these trees on the south and west sides of your house to encourage cooling shade in summer and warm sun in winter. Evergreen trees provide the most benefit on the north side of your house where the thick green boughs create a wind break, stopping cooling winds from reaching your house in winter.

For the optimum environmental benefit, consider planting trees along paved areas like driveways and sidewalks. Trees planted along pavement or hard surfaces intercept rainwater and divert this water away from storm drains, reducing localized flooding events. They also help to cool the water that flows to storm drains and into our streams by shading and reducing the temperature of the pavement the water flows on.

Choose a location that allows your tree enough space to grow. Tree species reach different heights and canopy diameters. Remember to pay attention to obstructions such as power lines, other landscaping plants, streetlights, etc. and call 811 before you dig to find out where underground utilities are located on your property.

Proper Planting

Young trees are packaged in three main forms: bare-root seedlings, container trees, and balled or burlapped trees. Most homeowners buy container trees as they are what is available at most hardware stores and nurseries. Container trees and burlapped trees, if cared for properly, have a high rate of transplant success and are generally preferred to bare-root seedlings. However, bareroot seedlings can be successful if they are transplanted correctly.

[Planting techniques](#) change slightly based on the way a tree is packaged. Click the links below to learn about planting techniques by package type.

[Bare-root Seedling](#)

[Container Trees](#)

[Balled and Burlapped Trees](#)

Long-term Care

Once you plant your tree, plan for its success! It's important to give your tree the best foundation. Do not fertilize your tree for the first year. Instead, provide mulch around the base of the tree for moisture retention and a slow release of nutrients. This will help your tree build a strong foundation of roots.

Follow these [three steps](#) to mulch properly.

1. Leave a 2-3" space between the tree trunk and mulch
2. Spread mulch to the edge of the tree canopy
3. Cover tree root area with no more than 6" of mulch, 2-3" is usually sufficient

Watering your tree during dry periods is the most important thing you can do for your tree in the first year. Turn your hose on a slow drip at the base of your new tree and soak for 30-45 minutes every 2-3 days during dry periods.

As the tree grows, continue to mulch around the tree. Remove small, dead branches through pruning but be careful not to cut into the healthy parts of the tree or top the tree! Tree topping, or cutting and shaping of large branches, can create places for disease and rot to enter your tree.

Celebrate Arbor Day!

Now's the time to plant a tree or multiple trees! Remember to pick the right location, plant properly, and provide care for long-term growth to maximize the benefits of your tree or trees.

Suggested Social Media Text

Well maintained, mature trees add value to your home. They also provide additional cost benefits of increased energy savings and reduced pollution to our waterways. Before selecting your tree, remember right tree, right place.

References and Resources:

USDA Value of trees <https://www.fs.usda.gov/news/releases/usda-forest-service-research-helps-quantify-value-trees-communities-across-nation>

Tree Advisory Board – Bowling Green <https://www.bgky.org/tree/benefits>

L. Herrmann, Matthew E. Hopton (2017). *The role of trees in urban stormwater management*, Landscape and Urban Planning, Volume 162, Pages 167-177.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169204617300464>

UKY Forestry Extension Video – From the Woods Today – Tree planting techniques

https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/planting_trees

UKY Forestry Extension - Planting Trees in Landscapes

https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/sites/forestry.ca.uky.edu/files/forfs_17-08_planting_trees_inlandscapes.pdf

HO-114 Planting container-grown trees and shrubs in your landscape

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/HO/HO114/HO114.pdf>

HO-91 Planting balled and burlapped trees and shrubs in your landscape

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ho/ho91/ho91.pdf>

HO-113 Planting bareroot trees and shrubs in your landscape

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/HO/HO113/HO113.pdf>

HO-121 Ecosystem services of landscape plants: A guide for consumers and communities

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/HO/HO121/HO121.pdf>