



Go Out on a Limb – Plant Trees!

Why Is It Important to Plant Trees?

Trees are much more than something that comes with a house. Planting trees is a beautiful way to provide shade, color, and texture to your property and your community. Trees also stabilize soil and soak up carbon dioxide which helps to clean up the air we breathe, guard against flooding, and they provide food for birds, insects, and mammals. Choosing a species that will fulfill multiple goals will benefit the home and homeowner.

Right Tree, Right Place

When selecting trees to plant, it's important to consider characteristics like tree height, spread of roots, whether the soil is compacted, water demand, how it drains, and how much sunlight it will receive. Planting the Right Tree, in the Right Place, for the Right Reason and in the Right Way will be good for you, the tree, and for Maryland.

Go Native

Native species of trees are a good choice because they are adapted to site conditions in your part of the country and they require far less water; saving time, money, and perhaps the most valuable natural resource, water. Trees that are native to Maryland include Dogwood, Sweetbay Magnolia, Eastern Redbud, Serviceberry, Red Maple, Pin Oak, Sweetgum and Sycamore. For a full list of native trees visit trees.maryland.gov.

Planting Your Tree

Now that you are ready to put your tree in the ground, putting effort into proper techniques allows your tree to grow healthy and strong to provide the many benefits for which you planted your tree(s). You will also prevent long term problems such as excessive lean, branches dying back, and roots and branches being girdled. The steps you take today can have lasting effects throughout its lifetime. Below you will find some information on how to plant your tree properly.





A properly planted tree has a container 2-3 times as wide as the root ball and is level to the soil surface.

- Dig hole 2-3 times as wide as container and no deeper than height of new tree's root ball. Top of root ball should be level or slightly above soil surface. Better 1" too high – than 1" too low!
- Remove container, cut large and circling roots. Gently pull and loosen outside roots from the root ball.
- Place tree in prepared hole, being sure the tree is straight up and centered in the hole.
- Do not add soil amendments such as manure, fertilizer or peat moss.

- Backfill hole with original soil, breaking up clumps and tamping firmly as you go. Do not tamp on the roots, only around the roots. Remove soil from grass clumps. Do not replace grass in hole.
- Apply 4" of mulch evenly to the entire disturbed area around the tree. Avoid mounding mulch. Keep the mulch 2" clear of trunk to avoid creating favorable places for pests and rotting of bark. Mulching retains soil moisture, suppresses weed growth and moderates the soil temperature.

Caring For Your Tree After Planting

Water for recently planted trees is essential! After your tree is planted, water it to settle the soil and minimize large air pockets. Some water is better than none, but 3-5 gallons a week, if it doesn't rain, is ideal. Water slowly to avoid runoff. Browning, wilting, scorch, and dieback are most often caused by lack of water. Don't wait for signs of moisture stress to show before watering.

Fertilizing

You may begin to fertilize your trees the second year after planting to improve growth rate and density of foliage. Apply slow release fertilizer late September to early November. Broadcast about ¼ lb of 33-0-0 (nitrogen) per 5'x5' area from the trunk outward. Or apply a balanced fertilizer (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and micronutrients) according to the manufacturer's label. Remember, too much fertilizer will injure your tree!

Resource: Marylanders Plant Trees Program
www.trees.maryland.gov/

Before You Plant...

- *Contact MISS UTILITY at 1-800-257-7777 for assistance in locating underground utilities before you dig the planting hole.*
- *Check the soils for compaction and drainage*
- *Evaluate the number of hours of sunlight the space receives each day*
- *Locate the nearest water source*
- *Identify homeowner objectives*



"Tips for Green Leaders in Frederick County" is a publication of the Frederick County Office of Sustainability and Environmental Resources, Office of the County Executive. For more information on this topic and about our programs, visit www.frederickcountymd.gov/sustainability, email us at sustainability@frederickcountymd.gov, or call at 301.600.1416. Sustainable Frederick County is on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

