

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TREE FOR YOUR YARD

**Proper Tree Selection.** Selecting the right tree for your yard is an important decision. It is wise to take the time to do a little research to determine the right tree for your particular yard. A properly sited tree will thrive with minimal care and grow for many years. It is really important to match the right plant to the site and to choose trees that will require minimal maintenance to increase your enjoyment of your new tree(s) for years to come. Planting the right tree in the right place is the key to saving energy with trees, while at the same time adding beauty, privacy, and even a wildlife-friendly habitat to your landscape. Please take the time to ask yourself the following questions which will help to determine the right tree for your yard.



**Shade, evergreen, and ornamental trees.** Do you have full sun or shade in your yard? Are you looking for a shade or ornamental tree that loses its leaves in the winter or an evergreen tree that keep its leaves (needles) year-round?



Shade trees are typically larger deciduous trees those that are chosen to produce shade for an otherwise sunny, hot location. Shade from deciduous trees reduces air conditioning needs and makes non-air conditioned homes more comfortable. If you decide you are looking for a shade tree, do you have a large open area in a back or front yard where a large tree will have plenty of room to grow? Understand that

large shade trees can grow to be 60'- 100' in height and spread at maturity. A tree of that size is often too large for a normal residential yard. Trees, such as oaks, sycamores, tulip poplars, etc., are better suited for planting in large, open spaces such as city parks and properties that have some acreage. For most residential yards, it is often wiser to choose a medium-sized shade tree that doesn't grow over 40-50'. Examples might include Chinese elms and other smaller elms, some of the smaller maples, American yellowwoods, and black gums, to name a few.





Evergreen trees, on the other hand, can be strategically placed on the north, northwest, or west side of homes to help shield homes from cold winter winds for energy conservation. Examples of evergreen trees for our area include white pines, Norway spruces, firs, etc.

Ornamental trees are typically smaller trees that are selected for their beautiful flowers, interesting fruit/bark, or other



characteristics. There are hundreds of ornamental trees to choose from, but include such trees as flowering crabapples, dogwoods, cherries, redbuds, etc.

**Site/drainage conditions.** Ask yourself if the area where you'd like to plant a new tree is well-drained; that is, does water drain off after heavy rains and doesn't stand and pool in areas.

Very heavy clay soils can compound this problem. Most trees grow best in well-drained soils rather than low, wet, poorly drained areas. If you have problems with a wet, poorly drained yard which causes continual problems with growing trees successfully, then proper tree selection becomes even more important. It may also require seeking the advice of a qualified tree professional or landscaper who can help you find ways to resolve the drainage problems first before planting trees. These are all very important questions to ask and items to take into consideration in order to select the right tree for your yard.

