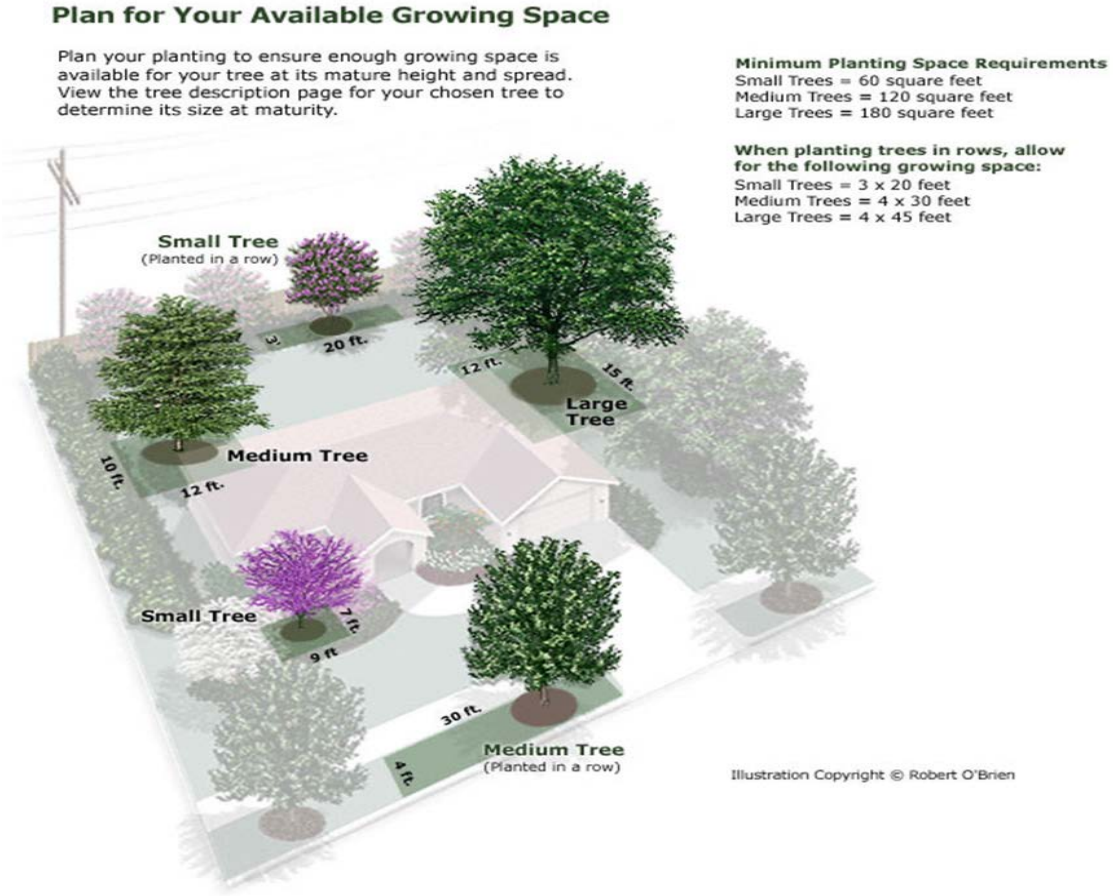
How do I Care for My Tree? — Selecting the Right Location to Plant

Properly placed and well maintained trees provide many benefits to the home and surrounding community. These benefits may include: providing shade for energy conservation and helping to lower the heat island effect, stormwater reduction and water quality improvement, increase in property values, quality of life enhancements, aesthetics (flowers/fall foliage) and wildlife benefits. Well maintained trees and urban forests provide value and beauty to homes and communities.

However, if planted in the wrong location a tree can be detrimental to a home's value and add additional cost to both homeowners and the community. A properly selected, correctly planted and well-maintained tree will provide a wealth of benefits for decades to come. Choosing an inappropriate site and/or tree, planting incorrectly and neglecting to provide regular maintenance (watering) may lead to a tree that never reaches its full benefit potential.



Before selecting a tree or a location to plant your tree consider the important factors on page 2.

When selecting a location to plant your tree consider these important factors:

Purpose – what is your purpose for planting a tree? Is it energy conservation, wildlife benefits, aesthetics, etc.? Once you determine the reason you want to plant a tree, then you can start considering other important factors.

Growth and form – What size will your tree be at maturity and how long will it take it to reach its mature size? What will its form be, wide spreading, columnar, vase-shaped, pyramidal? Will these shapes fit with the design and layout of your house and lawn?

Conflicts above and below ground -- Avoid planting large trees under utility lines, "Look Up Before You Plant". Where are underground utilities located? If planting in the front yard, are there sidewalks or driveways present, will the tree block street signage? If planting a tree with heavy leaf, flower or fruit "litter" locations that overhang pools or decks should be avoided. Large trees should be planted at least 20 feet from a house.

Rooting area – What is the size of the lawn area in which you want to plant your new tree ? Is it a small front yard as common in newer patio homes or a large backyard with ample space? A tree's ability to grow and remain healthy is largely dependent on available rooting space. Small trees will need about 400 cubic feet of soil or rooting area (width x length x depth) while mature large trees may need in excess of 1,200 cubic feet.

Sun, soil, moisture and hardiness – Does your tree require full sunlight, partial shade or full shade? What are the soil requirements such as pH? Is it a tree that does better in an alkaline or acid type soil? Is your yard well drained or poorly drained? Choose a species that tolerates your drainage conditions. What are the water requirements? What is the hardiness zone rating for your tree? Plants can be cold hardy, heat tolerant, or both. Most plant reference books provide a map of hardiness zone ranges. Check with your local garden center for the hardiness information for your region.

Pests – Is your tree native or an introduced or exotic species? Native trees tend to be less prone to pests and they tend to handle the weather extremes better than introduced species. What are the pest threats in your area and what trees are susceptible to them? **But remember, No tree is truly pest resistant!**