

## **Purchasing a Tree for Your Landscape**

Purchasing a tree or trees for your landscape is exciting. Trees not only add to your property value, they serve many functions in your landscape and for your home. To make an informed decision, there are several questions to ask yourself before purchasing a tree:

**What is the size of the full grown tree you are looking for?** The tree you purchase will grow! Make sure you are not purchasing a tree that will be too large or too small for the area, when it becomes mature. What other trees are in the area in which you wish to plant this tree? Are these trees full grown; will they eventually compete with each other for space?

**What kind of drainage does the area receive?** If the area stays wet, you will need to choose a tree that grows next to rivers and creeks. If the area is very dry, select a tree that thrives in dry soils.

**What shape will the full grown tree make?** If you desire a tree for shade, you will want a tree with a lot of horizontal growth instead of a tree that is tall and narrow. A large tree very close to your house will have to be trimmed away from the roof. The recommended distance from your home is 30'. Many trees in home landscapes are planted closer than 30'. The idea is to plant the tree away from the foundation. Roots which grow under the house may crack the foundation. If the canopy extends over a house, high winds or ice on the branches may cause them to fall onto the roof.

**Do you want fall color?** Deciduous trees can provide beautiful fall color, ranging from yellow to red to orange. The fall color may be more pronounced when we have a fall that cools down gradually instead of a warm weather followed by a freeze which will cause the trees to lose a lot of their leaves at once. Some trees provide dependable fall color year after year.

**Do you want a tree that loses its leaves in the fall (deciduous) or an evergreen tree?** A deciduous tree is nice on the west side of your house. It shades the house during the hot summer months, and in the winter allows sunlight to reach your house to warm it. An evergreen tree is a good choice on the north side of your house. It provides insulation from cold fronts. Evergreen trees also function well as a screen from a busy street or privacy from a neighbor.

Since you are making an investment, spend at least several minutes inspecting your tree. Make sure there are no insects or signs of damage. A well established root system is important for planting; if the plant has been potted recently, the roots may not have grown to fill the pot. On the other end of the spectrum, the plant may have spent too much time in its current container. Look at the holes around the edge of the pot. Are there tons of roots growing out of the bottom of the pot? Your nursery professional is an excellent resource; ask him/her about the plant you wish to purchase.