

Natural Resource Protection News

From the Town of Canandaigua Environmental Conservation Board

Are You Planning To Plant a Tree

By: ECB member Edith Davey

Congratulations if you are planning to plant a tree or three or more this spring!

To encourage success and satisfaction in planting consider these ideas.

Sample the soil: A simple, inexpensive, soil test available through Cornell Cooperative Extension can determine the pH (acidity), nutrition factors and soil type. Species guides can tell you what species will do well in your soil.

Survey the sunlight: Some trees grow well in partial shade, others need full sun..

Select for size: When the tree is mature, will it rub on the roof, interfere with power lines, invade septic system leach fields? Do you have underground utilities to protect? Will it interfere with a view?

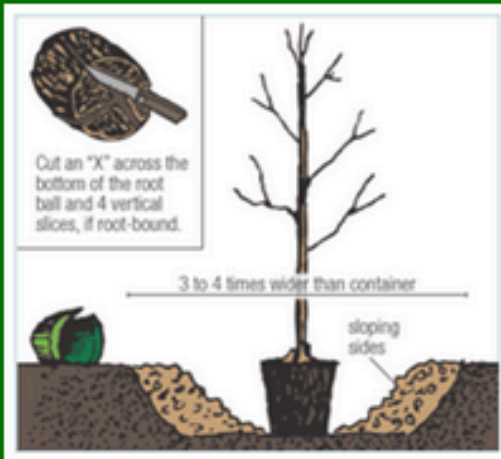
Select for Scenery and Service: Consider spring blooms, fall leaf color, tree shape and winter color. Trees provide winter windbreaks and summer shade. If you enjoy seeing birds and small mammals, think about planting **native species** that provide habitat benefits. Nuts, berries, seed cones, and nesting sites will bring these small joys to your property. Native species are adapted to local soils, weather, insects and diseases. Native wildlife is adapted to the habitat benefits native trees provide.

Spacing Is Important: Groupings of two or three trees look natural and encourage survival, as trees like to “hold hands” underground. The roots of some species – such as oaks – even grow together and exchange sugars and minerals.

Planting Bare Root Trees: These are usually dipped in hydrating gel prior to shipment to keep the roots moist and healthy.

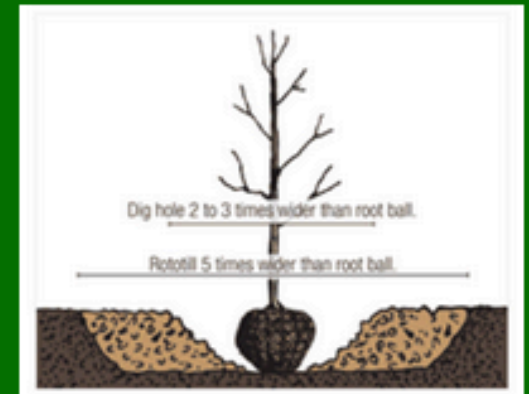
Untangle the roots if necessary and soak in water 3-6 hours before planting. Do not let roots dry out. Dig a hole deep enough for the roots and wider than seems necessary, so the roots can grow outward. Remove grass within a 3-foot circular area. Turning up soil in an area 3 feet in diameter aids root growth. Plant the tree at the same depth it stood in the nursery. Replace the soil, firming once when the hole is half-filled and again when filled. Do not pack tightly. Construct a water- holding berm around the tree and water thoroughly. After water has soaked in, place 2” of mulch over the soil but do not allow it to touch the trunk.





Planting Containerized Trees: Dig a hole 3-4 times wider than the container. Sides of the hole should be saucer shaped. Tap the sides of the container to loosen and gently remove the tree. If found to be root-bound, use a sharp knife to cut an X across the bottom of the root ball and four vertical slices on the sides. Set the tree in the middle of the hole. Plant at the same depth as in the container. Replace and firm soil around the roots. Construct a water-holding berm around the tree and water thoroughly. After water has soaked in, place 2" of mulch over the soil but do not allow it to touch the trunk.

Planting Balled & Burlapped Trees: Dig a hole 2-3 times as wide and as deep as the root ball. Loosen soil with a rototiller if needed. Sides of the hole should be sloping. Do not disturb the soil at the bottom of the hole. Handling the tree by the root ball – not the trunk – set the tree in the center of the hole. Root collar should be at or slightly above ground level. With tree in position, use wire cutters to remove the basket around the root ball. Remove burlap, twine, nails, tags or labels. Burlap under the root ball can stay in place but vinyl or treated burlap should be removed. Make sure the tree is straight and firmly replace original soil in the hole. Create a water-holding basin around the tree and give the tree a good watering. After the water has soaked in, spread protective mulch 2-4 inches deep covering the entire area of back-filled soil, keeping the mulch 4 inches away from the trunk.



For all new plantings:

The soil and mulch around your trees should be kept moist but not soggy. During dry weather, generously water the tree every 7 to 10 days during the first year. Water slowly at the dripline.

The dripline is the outermost edge of tree branches where water would naturally drip off leaves – it is also the usual horizontal extent of roots.

Sources:

Arbor Day Foundation of America

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County

Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District

Free Seedlings Available for Stream-side Plantings

DEC has announced that the application period for the Trees for Tribes' Buffer in a Bag Program is now open. Private and public landowners who qualify may apply for a free bag of 25 tree and shrub seedlings for planting near streams, rivers, or lakes to help stabilize banks, protect water quality, and improve wildlife habitat. Applications are due by 3:00 p.m. on April 12.



To qualify, landowners must have property in New York State with at least 50 feet that borders a stream, river, or lake, and provide photos or a map of the planting location. Visit DEC's website for more information about the Buffer in a Bag application process and requirements.

Contact treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov with questions and visit Trees for Tribes Program on DEC's website to learn more.