

IT'S TIME TO TALLY YOUR TREES



Autumn is the perfect time to survey your personal landscape. Deciduous trees are losing leaves; allowing wind, insect and disease damage to be observed. Woodpecker activity may signal insect infestations. Hemlocks are beginning to display the white woolly egg cases that identify Hemlock Woolly Adelgids that kill these useful trees. Treatments are available for some tree problems, others offer little hope.

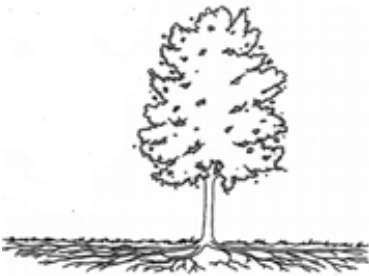
If your tree canopy contains multiple ash trees, you should plan now replace them when the nearly inevitable decline and death happens. Invasive and undesirable species are quick to arrive when canopy openings occur. Choosing replacements is an opportunity to improve your landscape and attract species you enjoy (e.g. cherry trees attract beautiful silk moths to lay eggs that overwinter as larvae in cocoons in these trees.)

Fall is an ideal time to plant trees and shrubs. Warm soil and cool air stimulates root growth to help trees and shrubs become established before the ground freezes. Nurseries usually sell these plants either in containers or with root balls wrapped in burlap. Bare root trees are very desirable and may also be available. Roots should be kept moist in all cases.

Container grown trees are generally the most expensive and are subject to circling roots that reduce a tree's vigor. Roots girdling the trunk should be removed before planting. The lightweight media used in containers is useful for drainage from pots, but once in the ground the medium may lose water too readily to the surrounding native soil.

Bare root plants are an excellent choice if they can be found, as they usually retain more of the roots. A Cornell study compared the amount of roots in a burlapped ball with the root mass on bare root harvested trees of the same size and species. The bare root trees had 200% more roots because harvesting machinery for bare root trees digs a much larger root system than the tree spade used for balled and burlapped digging.

PLANTING:



Trees should be planted so the root flare begins just at or slightly above the soil line. Planting too deeply buries fine absorbing roots, preventing them from accessing oxygen and suffocating the tree. If you anticipate settling of the soil, plant a little high. *It is better to plant too high than too deep.* Handle the tree by the root ball.

Dig the planting hole wide and shallow. Do not loosen soil that will be underneath the root system; instead, create loose soil horizontally for the spreading roots. The hole should be 2 -3 times wider in all directions than the root spread. Topmost roots should be buried 1-2 inches in soil. Backfill the hole with native soil unless it is all clay. Tamp gently to remove air pockets. Mulch 2-3 inches deep, leaving a 2 inch space near the trunk.

Grass around the tree should be removed to prevent competition for water. Slow release tree irrigation bags such as the style pictured may be helpful in conserving time and water.



USEFUL WEBSITES FOR PLANT INFORMATION AND SELECTION:

http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/factnatives.pdf

<http://www.ecosny.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECOS-Tree-Booklet-FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.arboday.org/trees/planting/>