

This guide was created

to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about tree planting and care in the Austin area.

It suggests native and well-adapted trees for our region and describes how to grow them successfully. If it helps to convince you of the need to plant and/or helps you with actual tree planting, it will have served its purpose. The tree illustration foldout can also be used as a wall poster.

Please pass along or recycle the guide when you are through with it.

Why We Plant Trees

Energy Conservation

Properly placed shade trees can reduce home energy consumption up to to 30%, by providing shade for roofs and walls.

Property Value

Trees help to stabilize your neighborhood and can add 13 to 21% to the value of a typical Austin home.

Air Pollution Reduction

Trees help clean the air by removing poisonous gases and particulates such as dust and pollen. Through photosynthesis, trees reduce atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and release vital oxygen. In addition, well-placed trees reduce the need to burn



fossil fuels to generate energy for air conditioning.

Water Quality and Conservation

Trees and other landscape plants help slow surface water runoff and reduce soil erosion. The soil adsorbs more rainwater; consequently, less water is needed on your landscape. With overall temperature reduced by shading, plants and turf require less water.

Wildlife Habitat

Trees provide food, nesting sites and protection to a wide variety of birds and animals.

Environmental Improvement

Trees contribute to community pride, instill feelings of relaxation and tranquility, and add natural character and beauty through a variety of forms, colors and textures.

Personal Statement

Planting a tree can be an act of peace that says you care about our environment and our future. What better way to either honor a friend or loved one or commemorate a birth or marriage than to plant a tree.

Where to Plant

Plan Before You Plant

Plan before you plant. Make a sketch of your property showing existing trees and landscape, sidewalks, driveways, building outlines, compass directions and overhead or buried utility locations. Play it safe and call "one call" utility locators two working days before digging. The "one call" utility locator service is free. In Austin, call at 472-2822.

Determine your planting goals and select those trees that fill your needs.

Planting Site Selection

Consult the Tree Selection Chart to determine mature height and spread of your selected trees. Make sure you give your trees adequate room to

grow. Trees and shrubs should not be planted where they will grow to interfere with utility lines or equipment. Try to envision your trees in 5, 10, or even 50 years into the future. Know what a tree will look like at maturity and consider height, crown spread and root space when planting your landscape. For reference, the tree chart lists mature sizes.

Large deciduous trees on the south and west sides of your home will shade the roof and walls in the summer and help conserve energy. In the winter, they will allow the warming sunlight through. (See illustration below.) Evergreen trees planted on the north side of your home can help block cold, north winter winds.

Things To Avoid:

- Planting large trees under utility lines.
- Blocking traffic signs or views at corners.
- Blocking windows or desirable views.
- Spacing trees too closely or shading gardens.
- Encroaching on your neighbor.
- Planting where roots will damage pavement

Achieving maximum enjoyment from your trees and avoiding future problems will be realized through good planning. Consult a landscape architect or other qualified professional if you need assistance in planning your landscape.

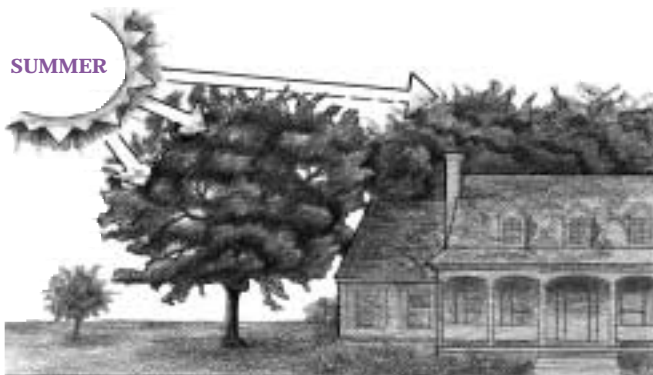
What to Plant

There are many kinds of trees available for planting in your yard. The following tree listings and tree illustrations can help you decide what to plant. The references should help if you want more information on planting.

Here are guidelines to follow when choosing a tree at a nursery:

- Select trees with straight, single trunks.

Deciduous trees planted near the south and west walls will reduce indoor temperatures in summer by shading the roof and walls.



- Use small trees, shrubs and vines to provide shade for walls and windows, if there is not enough space for a large tree.

- Plant only trees with a small mature height near or under overhead utility lines. (See Tree Chart for trees under twenty-five feet.)

- Provide shade to your A.C. unit to increase efficiency.



- Avoid trees with bark damage or broken and dead limbs.
- If the tree is dormant, scratch a twig and make sure it is green and moist inside.
- *For Container Trees:* Remove from container; check roots to ensure they are no larger than a pencil in diameter.
- *For Balled and Burlap Trees:* Check to ensure that new roots are growing and that the tree is not loose in the ball.

When to Plant

Now! The best time to have planted a tree was 50 years ago- the next best time is now. Trees grown in containers can be planted at any time, but October through March is the best in Austin. This will allow the roots of your new tree to become established before our hot dry summers.

In winter, these trees allow sunlight to help heat the house.



SIMPLE STEPS TO PLANTING A TREE

1 **Select the Right Tree For the Right Place.** Proper tree planting begins with good planning. Determine your planting goals and match the mature size, soil and moisture requirements of your trees to the site. (Refer to the tree spacing chart below.)

2 Mark out a planting area 2 to 5 times wider than the rootball diameter (the wider the better). Loosen this area to about an 8" depth. This will enable your tree to extend a dense mat of tiny roots well out into the soil in the first one to ten weeks in the ground. Often early root growth is limited by the width of the hole and loosened soil perimeter.

3 In the center of the planting area, dig a hole at least twice the diameter of the rootball and no deeper than the depth of soil in the rootball. The bottom of the ball should rest on solid undisturbed soil. When finished, you want the soil at the base of the tree to be at the same level on the trunk as it was in the container. If part of the trunk gets below ground, its bark may rot. The roots also need to get the same ratio of air to water that they received in the container or at its original site. Resting the rootball on solid ground prevents excessive settling.

4 Make sure the sides of the hole are rough and uneven. In very hard soils, a rough edge to the hole may help force new roots to grow out into the surrounding soil.

5 Place the tree in the hole. If the tree is in a container, pull the container away from the root ball. Don't pull the tree out by its trunk. Place the root ball in the center of the hole and adjust the tree so it is straight and at the proper level.

Pulling the tree out of the container by its trunk is a good way to damage the small roots within the ball. The tree needs these roots to help survive transplanting to its new home.

Stand back and look at the tree now — before you put the soil back into the hole. You can make adjustments at this time without seriously harming the root ball.

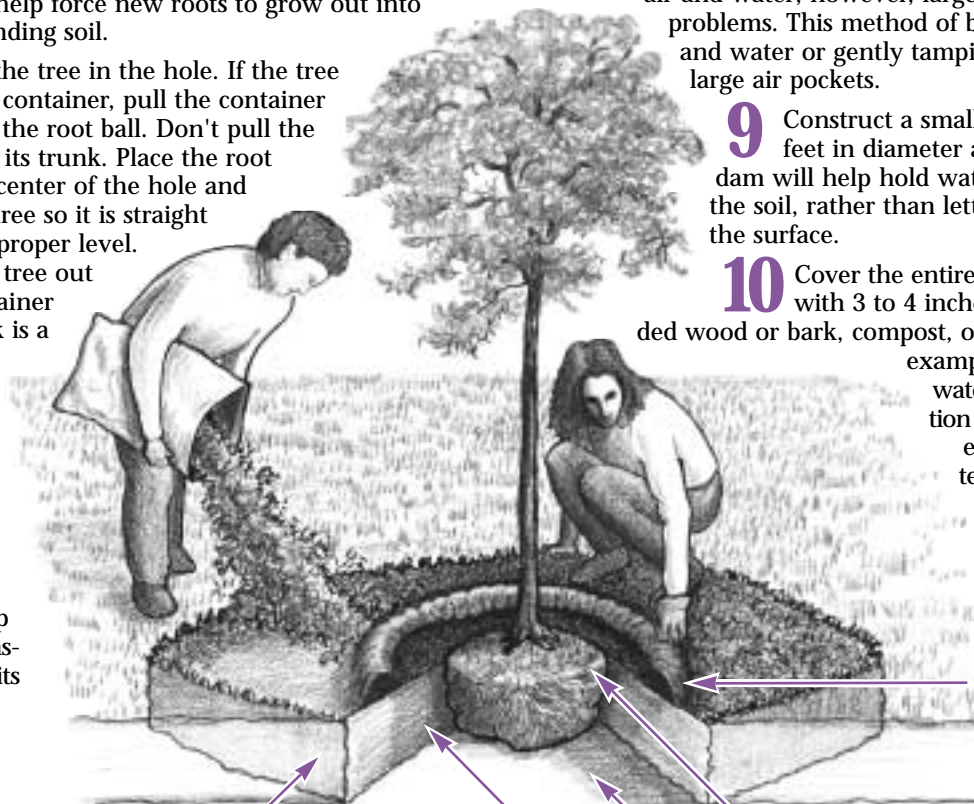
6 For balled and burlapped trees, rest the root ball in the center of the hole, and reshape the hole so the tree will be straight and at the proper level. After adjusting the tree, pull the burlap and any other material away from the sides and top of the root ball. Don't try to get the burlap material out of the hole—just let it rest beneath the root ball of the tree. Exposing the sides of the root ball to the soil will enable the tree's roots to grow in the most important directions. If you adjust or lift the tree after its ball has been unwrapped, chances are that the root ball will be damaged.

7 Backfill with the original soil. Mixing fertilizer, compost, or other material with the original soil is not recommended. If the backfill soil around the root ball is improved, the tree may be slow in developing a good, widespread root system.

8 Fill until the hole is half full (or half empty!). Flood the hole with a slow hose or tamp gently with your foot to firm the soil. Repeat until the hole is full. Do not press too firmly—only firm enough to hold the tree upright. The best soil for root growth has spaces for both air and water; however, large air pockets can cause problems. This method of backfilling with soil and water or gently tamping will remove these large air pockets.

9 Construct a small dam or berm three feet in diameter around the tree. This dam will help hold water until it soaks into the soil, rather than letting it run off across the surface.

10 Cover the entire loosened area of soil with 3 to 4 inches of mulch — shredded wood or bark, compost, or dry leaves, for example. Mulch will slow water loss, reduce competition from weeds and grasses, will moderate soil temperature and will provide a small amount of "nutrients."



• Loosened area of soil 2 to 5 times wider than diameter of root ball. Mulch entire loosened area.

• Do not over-compact the soil – only enough to hold the tree upright.

• Top of root ball at grade level.

• Create a small dam 3 feet in diameter.

• Solid, undisturbed soil.

Care of Your Tree

Monitor your trees for problems such as disease, insects and broken or dead limbs. You will be amazed at how well your trees will respond to your care. Regular watering is important. New trees need about one inch of water per week for about two years when rainfall is low. This is true for all trees even though they may be native or drought tolerant. Be careful not to drown the roots; they need air as well as water to grow.

Do not add fertilizer at planting. Sprinkle a balanced fertilizer (one that contains nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and micronutrients) over your planting area the next spring, and again two times during the growing season. Always follow the fertilizer manufacturer's label as to the amount to apply; too much will injure the tree. Remember: a good mulch layer will provide a natural source of nutrients to the tree. Maintain a 3-4" mulch layer within the planting area. Keep mulch away from the base of the trunk to avoid potential rotting of the bark.

It is not necessary to prune a tree at the time of planting unless it is to remove the following:

- Dead branches
- Diseased or damaged branches
- Crossed or rubbing branches
- Narrow crotches
- Multiple main stems (select one main stem)

Do not prune trees near power lines. Contact your electric utility for this service.

Follow the diagram below to remove limbs correctly. With the proper technique, the trees will heal more quickly and with less stress. Always sterilize your tools to avoid the spread of disease. Do this before you start, when moving from tree to tree and when complete. All wounds on Oak trees should be painted to help prevent oak wilt infection.

With proper care, your tree investment will pay off many times over. Call a qualified arborist if you have any questions on tree care.



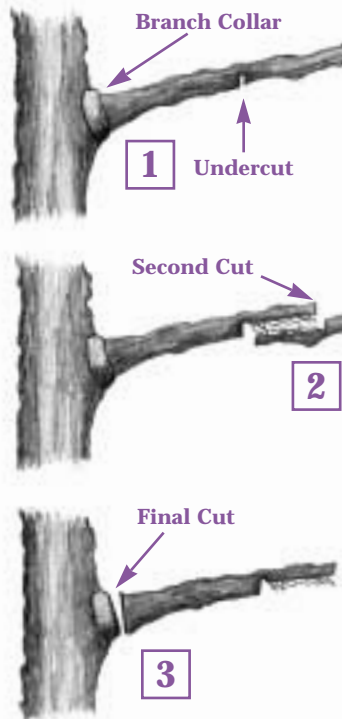
PROPER TREE PRUNING

Use this method to remove a limb with a saw, so that the limb does not "tear" down the remaining branch to the trunk. Lopping shears should be used on branches smaller than 3/4" in diameter. Remove branches larger than 3/4" (with hand or chain saw) using the following three-cut method:

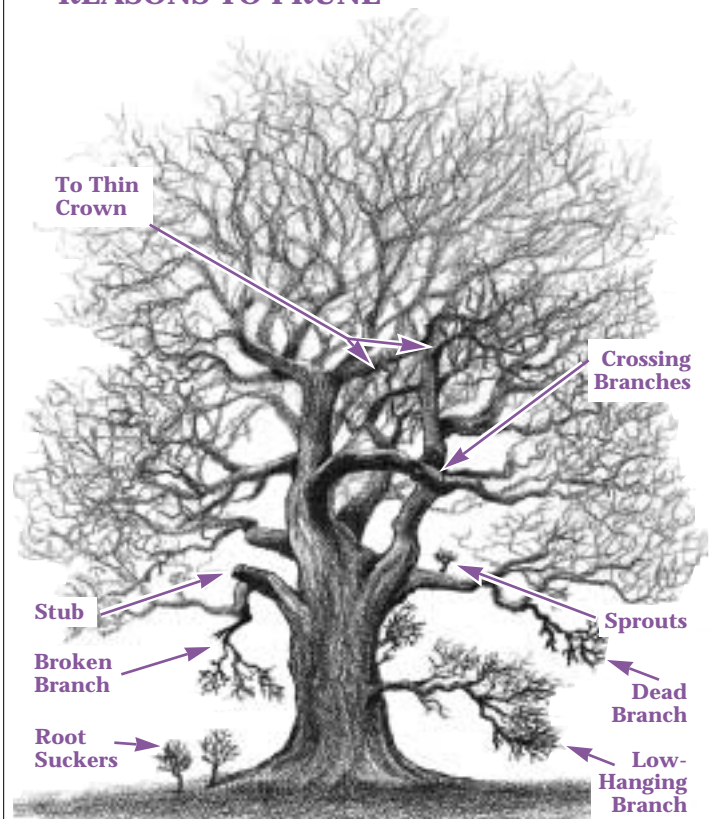
1) Undercut 12-24" up from the branch collar. This stops the bark from tearing.

2) Make the second cut from the top all the way through the branch, 2-3" above cut 1.

3) The final cut should be just beyond the branch collar. Support the stub so it does not tear the bark.



REASONS TO PRUNE



TREE SPECIES SELECTION CHART FOR AUSTIN

COMMON NAME	TREE TYPE	AT MATURITY HEIGHT	SPREAD	GROWTH RATE	MOISTURE CONDITIONS	BENEFITS	POSSIBLE PROBLEMS	COMMENTS
Arizona Cypress	Evergreen	25-50'	25-50'	Moderate	Dry	Bark Texture/Color	Disease	Silvery foliage. Well-suited to limestone soils. Attractive, peeling red bark.
Bald Cypress	Deciduous	50'+	25-50'	Moderate	Moist	Wildlife: Fall color	Fruit Drop	Well-adapted to many soil conditions and moisture. Handles wet areas well.
Bigtooth Maple	Deciduous	25-50'	25-35'	Moderate	Moderate	Fall color	Disease; Insects	Native to the Hill Country; good for well-drained limestone soils. Excellent fall color.
Bur Oak	Deciduous	50'+	50'+	Rapid	Moderate	Unique Leaves and Acorns; Wildlife	Fruit Drop	Excellent tree, not utilized enough. Drought-tolerant native with rough texture and large acorns.
Carolina Buckthorn	Deciduous	To 25'	To 15'	Slow	Moderate to Moist	Wildlife: Fall Color; Fruit	Asymmetrical Form	Attractive fall color and fruit. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Carolina Cherry Laurel	Evergreen	25-30'	To 25'	Moderate	Moist	Wildlife: Flower	Surface Roots	Makes a good screening hedge. Requires good drainage.
Cedar Elm	Deciduous	25-50'	25-35'	Slow	Moderate	Wildlife: Fall color	Disease; Insects	Well-adapted shade tree for Austin. Some problems with aphids and powdery mildew.
Chinese Elm	Deciduous	40-60'	30-40'	Rapid	Moist to Dry	Wildlife: Fall Color; Bark Texture	Do not confuse with undeciduous Siberian Elm.	Excellent tree for all soil conditions. Extremely tough and durable. Attractive lacey bark.
Chinese Pistache	Deciduous	25-40'	25-40'	Rapid	Moderate	Fall color	Poor form when young.	Brilliant fall color. Tolerant of poor, dry soils. Poor shape when young but fills out with maturity.
Chinquapin Oak	Deciduous	50+	25-50'	Moderate	Moderate	Wildlife	Fruit Drop	Good for limestone soils. Attractive, light-colored bark.
Crape myrtle	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25"	Moderate	Dry	Flower; Bark	Disease; Insects	Many sizes and colors available. Good summer flower specimen tree. Powdery mildew a problem. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Desert Willow	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Rapid	Dry	Wildlife: Flower	Asymmetrical Form	Showy flowers through summer. Needs good drainage. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Eldarica Pine	Evergreen	25-40'	20-30'	Rapid	Moderate to Dry	Living Christmas Tree	Disease	Fast-growing, drought-tolerant pine for the Austin area.
Escarpment Black Cherry	Deciduous	25-50'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Wildlife: Flower; Fruit	Fruit Drop	Attractive, upright tree with showy fall color and interesting bark. Not for heavy, clay soils.
Eve's Necklace	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Flower; Fruit	Availability	Attractive flower in spring and fruit through fall and winter. Will tolerate light, wet soils. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Goldrain Tree	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Flower; Fruit	Freeze Damage	Large sprays of yellow flowers in spring and attractive seed pods in late summer. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Lacey Oak	Deciduous	20-30'	To 25'	Slow	Dry	Texture; Color	Slow Growth	Unusual native oak for its bluish foliage.
Live Oak	Evergreen	25-50'	50'+	Moderate	Dry	Wildlife	Disease; Insects; Surface Roots	Limit use to areas with few live oaks. Allow plenty of room. Oak will disease is a problem.
Mesquite	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Slow	Dry	Wildlife: Flower	Fruit Drop; Thorns	Extremely drought-tolerant with desirable light, filtered shade. Thornless varieties available. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Mexican Buckeye	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Dry	Wildlife: Flower	Fruit Drop	Good as a multi-stemmed specimen. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Mexican Plum	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Wildlife: Flower; Fall Color; Bark Texture and Color	Fruit Drop	Bright white flowers and edible fruit. May need protection from winter winds. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Pecan	Deciduous	50+	50+	Slow	Moderate	Edible Fruit, Wildlife	Brittle Wood; Disease; Insects	State tree of Texas. Plant with plenty of room! Grows slowly until well-established.
Possumhaw Holly	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Fruit; Wildlife; Fall and Winter Color	Surface Roots; Freeze Damage	Striking native plant. Bright red berries in late fall and winter. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Texas Mountain Laurel	Evergreen	To 25'	To 25'	Slow	Dry	Wildlife: Flower	Poisonous Seeds	Excellent drought-tolerant specimen. Outstanding fragrant spring blooms. Needs good drainage. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Texas Persimmon	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Slow	Dry	Wildlife: Bark Texture/Color	Fruit Drop	Drought-tolerant native with attractive exfoliating bark. Small edible, black fruit. Appropriate for near utility lines.
Texas Redbud	Deciduous	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Flower; Fall Color	Short Lived	Several Redbuds available. "Texensis" best for our area. Eastern variety does poorly.
Texas Red Oak	Deciduous	25-50'	To 25'	Moderate	Dry	Wildlife: Bark Texture; Fall Color/Acorns	Oak Wilt	Several Red Oaks available. "Texana" best for our area. Sometimes referred to as Quercus shumardii var. texana.
Texas Sycamore	Deciduous	50+	50+	Rapid	Moist	Wildlife: Bark Texture/Color	Fruit Drop	Provide plenty of room and a moist site.
Western Soapberry	Deciduous	25-30'	25-30'	Moderate	Moderate to Dry	Fall color	Sucker Growth	Large amber berries in fall through winter.
Yaupon Holly	Evergreen	To 25'	To 25'	Moderate	Moderate	Wildlife: Attractive Fruit; Sun or Shade-Tolerant	None	Females hold bright red berries through winter. Very hardy. Bustly unless pruned. Appropriate for near utility lines.

Tree Spacing Guide for Your Landscape

Tree Height	Minimum Spacing From Wall	Minimum Spacing From Building Corner
Up to 25'	10'	10'
25'-50'	15'	15'
50'+	20'	15'

Note: these are general guidelines only:

- * Check each tree's mature spread when placing so you do not crowd them.
- * Leave half of this spread between the tree and buildings, utility lines, or existing mature trees.
- * When planting near a street corner, do not place trees or shrubs that would block a driver's view of the sign, signal, or other vehicles on the intersecting street.

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ABOUT TREEFOLKS

Treefolks' mission is to facilitate the renewal of Austin's and Central Texas' urban forest and ecosystem through public tree plantings and education.

Because we are community based, we promote cooperation between businesses, schools, government, citizen groups and individuals to join us and further our projects and programs.

How can you help our urban forest?

- Plant trees and help them grow!
- Volunteer with TreeFolks at public plantings and work days.
- Recycle your newspapers and other paper products.
- Become a member of TreeFolks.
- If you are a business, join "Partners For Shade," a TreeFolks program that provides area businesses a way to invest in Austin and directly impact quality of life in our community. For more info, contact TreeFolks' office at 443-5323.

TreeFolks Membership levels are:

- \$15.00 Student/Senior \$100.00 Sponsor
- \$25.00 Individual \$500.00 Sustaining
- \$35.00 Family \$1000.00 Benefactor

Join Online at treefolks.org or make checks payable to: TreeFolks, PO Box 704, Austin TX 78767.

Tree Brochure and Poster

This information is available in a beautifully printed brochure, complete with a wall poster illustrating recommended trees for the Austin area. To order, send a check for \$3.00 along with your mailing address to: TreeFolks, PO Box 704, Austin, Texas, 78767.



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