



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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So You Want to Plant a Tree

May 1, 2005, Brandon, Manitoba

The number one mistake made by home owners planting trees is to choose a tree that will be too big for their planting location. Always take into account the mature size of the tree and choose a tree that fits your site. Big site big tree, small site small tree. Look up, way up, are there wires? If so plant a tree that will mature into a small size. Crab apples, cherries, and Asian maples are ideal candidates for small sites. Avoid planting your tree over under ground utilities that may require service or interfere with the roots of the tree. Take our harsh weather into account when planting. All trees moderate the environment and reduce pollution. Large shading deciduous trees planted to the south will shade you from the summer sun while letting winter rays through. Evergreens planted to the north and west can reduce your heating bill. Carefully analyze your site before you select your tree.

Once you have your site conditions figured out chose a tree to fit those conditions. Some trees have a great degree of adaptability to adjust to different site conditions. Shade tolerance, drought tolerance and ability to survive alkaline or flooded soils are just a few potential problems. Adverse site conditions effect the survival of the trees you will plant. Hardiness refers to a trees ability to survive low temperatures. This means not only the minus forty blast of winter but the late frost and May snow storms that we occasionally receive. Native species like the green ash wait until the last frost has passed to send out leaves. Introduced species may be fooled by late winter warm spells. Trees that break dormancy early may be caught with there leaves out too soon. Check to see that the tree you plan to plant is fully hardy. Disease and pest resistance are two areas that must be addressed to avoid disappointment and expensive maintenance in the future. Choose a tree that is healthy and vigorous. Look out for old stock or trees that have just been planted into pots. Once you have crossed all these criteria off the list, you have to pick a tree that has the potential for good branch structure. Be on the look out for weakly attached branches with narrow "v" like crotches. These may fail later in the life of the tree. The process of selecting and promoting permanent branches is easy once you know the basics and will be the topic of a future article. It's enough to say that all of the branches you have on your 5 to 6 foot tree purchased from the nursery will probably not be there for the life of the tree. Most will be removed while the tree is young for clearance and shaping in the landscape. I guess there is a lot more to planting a tree than just throwing it in a hole!

We will get to actually planting a tree next time, after the snow melts!

Brad Gurr is an I.S.A. Certified Arborist and Plant Health Care Specialist dedicated to the care and preservation of trees. For suggestions for further reading or answers to any plant health care related questions please feel free to contact Brad at gurrb@yahoo.com