



# TREE PLANTING



## Why Plant Trees?

Trees can provide beauty and structure to your landscape while offering other benefits to you and the environment. Trees can reduce your heating and cooling costs, provide shelter while outdoors, clean the air, offer wildlife habitat, and add value to your property.



## What Kind of Tree Should I Plant?

- Native species are more tolerant of site conditions, will live longer, and benefit wildlife more than exotic species.
- The tree must be appropriate for the site (size, longevity, form, leaf color, fruit, planting and maintenance requirements). Make sure to consider buildings, power lines, and any other easements nearby.
- It should provide enjoyment for you as the homeowner, so consider its appearance and function in your landscape.

## How to Plant A Tree:

1. Before beginning any project, check homeowner association covenants, as well as local and county ordinances. Do not work in a drainage, utility, or other easement without the proper permits. Before digging, call the Indiana Underground Plant Protection Service (1-800-382-5544) to identify any buried utilities.
2. Although a tree can be planted nearly any time of year, the ideal time to plant is early fall. Late winter or early spring is the second best choice.
3. Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly shallower than the root ball. Loosen the soil on the sides and bottom of the hole using a gardening rake or shovel.
4. Carefully remove the plant from its container, burlap, or plastic. Loosen the root system and shorten extremely long roots. Locate the root flare (where the roots begin to branch off the trunk).
5. Plant the tree so that the root flare is at or just above grade level and roots are facing downward and outward. Avoid drying root tips.
6. Fill in the hole, lightly tapping the soil or adding water to settle it.
7. Create a temporary water basin around the trunk and water thoroughly.
8. Add 1-2 inches of mulch around the tree without touching the trunk. Too much moisture around the trunk will encourage disease.

## Early Maintenance:

Once planted, trees must have plenty of water to promote deep root growth. For the first two years, trees should be watered after a week of dry weather. Wilted leaves are a key sign of moisture stress. Water trees slowly enough that the water soaks in rather than runs off. Do not fertilize in the first two years. Fertilizing will promote shoot growth instead of root growth. Only fertilize after this period if your soil requires extra nutrients (this can be discovered easily by a soil test). Keep the area beneath the tree mulched and free of other plants that may steal moisture from the new planting.



Photo courtesy of: USDA NRCS