

What to consider when adding trees to your landscape

Planning is important to prevent landscape decline. Below are factors which should be considered when adding trees to your landscape.

- 1) Cultural needs.** Trees have specific conditions which allow them to thrive. Soil makeup and watering requirements are two of the more important factors to consider when planting a tree. Select a tree with similar cultural needs as the rest of your landscape. It would be unwise to plant a tree which prefers a drier soil in an area of plants which require large amounts of watering, and vice versa. Trees often prefer infrequent, long watering sessions to promote healthy root growth. Most annuals and turf areas need frequent watering to keep the plant green and healthy.
- 2) Consider the tree's size at maturity.** The mature size of the trees you install may affect other trees, structures, plants and people. Planting trees closely together forces trees to compete for nutrients and space (above and below ground), and potentially cause branch interference and weak structure. Frequently, if trees are planted in a forest like setting, the outer rim of trees are much stronger than those planted on the interior (they are sheltered by the outer plantings). This promotes weak trunks on the interior which may break if ever exposed to high winds or adverse weather. Allow your tree to live up to its potential, don't overplant.
- 3) Purpose.** There are thousands of trees available to the consumer. When considering a tree for your yard, make sure you consider your reason behind planting a tree. It is entirely possible that a mighty Burr Oak is your favorite tree, but will your yard support that tree? Pick a tree based on your needs and the tree's needs. Chances are you will find a tree that will be perfect for your situation. Maybe it will be your new favorite tree!
- 4) Diseases/Afflictions.** All trees can suffer from any number of afflictions. Many of these problems can be avoided by following the previous steps, but some cannot. If a pest/disease is prevalent in your state or local area, determining which tree species/varieties are susceptible to disease is a good start when searching for the perfect tree. In many cases, disease and pest resistant varieties may be available (such as in elm and various fruit species). In other instances, your choices may need to be altered in order to find a tree that will thrive in the present conditions within your geographic area.
- 5) Special Considerations.** In some instances, certain trees should be avoided due to personal circumstances such as allergies, pet activities and children. Be considerate of those in your household who may be harmed by the tree you are considering. Thorns, pollen and poisonous fruits can be very damaging to those around you, and yourself!

For more information about trees in your landscape, contact Dennis Donovan, forestry supervisor, at ddonovan@highlandsranch.org or 720-240-5915.

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