



Considerations for selecting trees...

Have you ever seen a lovely tree in a magazine, in another yard or garden and decided that was the tree for you? You can just see it shading your patio! But before you buy that tree, ask yourself these questions and do a little research...

- Consider the size the tree will be when mature. Will it fit the space 30 or 40 years from now? Think about spread as well as height.
- Will branches grow to close to the house or interfere with walking down the sidewalk? Pruning away from the house can become expensive, will probably need to be repeated, and may not be in the best interest of the tree! Are power lines overhead? If so, plant trees that will be small at maturity.
- What about debris? Does the tree drop fruit or seeds that you wouldn't want on your deck? If you want this tree, it belongs farther out in the yard. If you have young children who run barefoot, you probably don't want a holly dropping spiny leaves on the ground.
- Does your yard provide the light, soil and moisture conditions the tree needs? The mountain ash, *Sorbus Americana*, is not likely to do well in Richmond, elderberries will not do well in sun and dry soil, and some trees will not tolerate areas where water stands for a while after a rain.

You have marked some species off the list now and you have learned about the characteristics of those trees you are considering, but there is still a lot to choose from. Consider this...

- Go native. Species native to this area are best for supporting our complex ecosystem. Visit this site to learn why. It's well worth the 10 minutes it will take to read.
<http://bringingnaturehome.net/native-gardening/gardening-for-life>

When you shop ask for plants by the Latin name rather than the common name. For example, if you ask for a fringe tree you are more likely to get the Chinese fringe tree rather than our native species; ask for *Chionanthus virginicus* to be sure you get the native.

- Go out on a limb and plant something different. Just because all your neighbors have dogwoods doesn't mean you should. Just enjoy theirs! Increasing the diversity of our urban forest reduces the potential for problems and will help provide a variety of nectar, fruit and seed sources over longer periods of time. The birds, bees and butterflies and others are likely to benefit.
- Big benefits come from big trees. Trees that will grow large and live long need to be planted now to provide temperature moderation and watershed protection in years to come. So think beyond immediate impact and, instead of planting a redbud or dogwood for instant curb appeal, consider trees for the future. You can have both! Plant one tree for now and one for later. An oak and a redbud or dogwood can be planted near each other; by the time the oak needs the room, the smaller tree has reached its life span.

Helpful Websites

Native Plant Center: Chesapeake Center www.nativeplantcenter.net

Good descriptions of cultural requirements. Filters available to help narrow your search.

Bringing Nature Home bringingnaturehome.net/native-gardening/woody-plants

Lists of best plants for moth and butterfly species, whose caterpillars feed birds and others.

Arbor Day Foundation Tree Wizard www.arborday.org/shopping/trees/treeWizard/intro.cfm

Answer questions to narrow your search for suitable trees. Non-native trees are included on this site.

Tree Selection www.treesaregood.com/treecare/resources/TreeSelection.pdf

Buying High Quality Trees www.treesaregood.com/treecare/resources/buying_qualitytrees.pdf

Right Tree, Right Place * <http://www.arborday.org/trees/righttreeandplace/>

*non-natives are used as examples