

National Arborist Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dig a \$50 Hole for a \$5 Tree

There is common belief that anybody who can dig a hole and plant a tree “green side up” can grow a tree. The truth is that incorrect planting can lead to major developmental problems for the tree, which can kill the tree outright or at best create an unhealthy, high maintenance tree.

Planting the right tree in the right place and in the correct manner will enhance the beauty of your property while maintaining safety and avoiding expensive future maintenance costs. Healthy trees can add up to 25% to the value of your property. Not only do they offer high aesthetic value, they also help in the conservation of nature around your homes. Spring is generally considered one of the best times of the year to plant.

Preparation is the most important aspect of planting. Select healthy, well-structured planting stock from a reputable nursery. Make sure you have selected a species that can grow well in your climatic conditions. When selecting a site, consider how large the tree will grow - then factor the proximity to power lines and buildings. Maintain at least a 15-foot distance from a utility line, after allowing for 20 years of growth. Finally, most trees thrive in a moderate to well-drained site.

Proper planting will ensure good root development and tree growth. While digging, make sure the hole width is at least twice the width of the root ball. The hole should not be deeper than the root ball. Backfill soil may be amended with one part of peat moss or composted organic material per four parts soil. Avoid compacting the soil around the root ball. Water extensively after planting and at least once a week during dry periods, but avoid wetting the leaves. Remove dead or broken branches at planting time. Apply a 3- to 4-inch layer of mulch over the root ball and slightly away from the trunk to help keep soil moist and reduce weed growth. Do not pile mulch against the trunk and do not apply more than 4 inches. Brace the tree only if needed.

Trees planted in the right places around your property will help control the temperature around your house by controlling precipitation, humidity and air temperature. They also act as windbreaks in winter, offer a sun screen in summer, act as noise barriers and control air pollution.

A competent, professional arborist can offer diagnosis and preventive maintenance to keep your trees in top condition and help you make the right decisions in planting and selecting a tree. If you would like to learn more about your trees' value or are unsure of their state of health, you can find an NAA member firm close to you by calling, 1-800-733-2622, or by a zip code search on the NAA's Web Site www.NATLAR.com.