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Fall is a great time to plant trees, as the humidity and heat have decreased, causing less stress.

Diversity is very important. We are all aware of the problems Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight caused in the early to mid 1900s. Now, we're seeing what is happening in other states with Emerald Ash Borer and to our Pine trees due to Pine Wilt.

Selection

To limit the damage caused by any insect or disease, plant an array of species in our landscapes. Due to this need for diversity, the Nebraska Forest Service's ReTree Nebraska program recommends trees to use.

The trees for 2013 are: baldcypress, catalpa, Kentucky coffeetree, elm hybrids, sugar maple, shantung maple, miyabi maple, chinkapin oak, bur oak, English oak, gamble oak, tree lilac, concolor fir and Black Hills spruce.

When planting a tree, consider utilities, future construction sites, and the mature size of the plant. Large trees should be planted a minimum of 15 to 20 feet from buildings and 20-25 feet from power lines.

Purchasing a 3-6 foot tree saves money, and results in one that re-establishes faster and outgrows more expensive alternatives. Do not purchase any trees that are root bound in their container.

Planting

When planting a tree, ensure it is done correctly or it will not live as long as it should. Take out of its container. Remove wraps and ropes from the roots of balled and burlapped trees, including the burlap. Gently remove excess soil and get down to the main root ball. Remove soil from the top of the root ball until you find the root flare, and tease out any circling roots.

The hole should be only as deep as the root ball and twice as wide. (The root flare, where the first lateral roots emerge from the trunk, should be visible at the soil surface when it is planted.) Fill the hole with the soil. Don't amend the planting hole with top soil or compost, unless you can amend the entire area of the tree's mature root system.

Mulch

Add mulch around the tree to keep roots cool, hold moisture for the tree, and keep weeds, turf, and lawn equipment out away from the trunk of the tree. The mulch ring should be 2-3 inches deep and should go out at least 2-3 feet.

Staking

Only stake the tree if it is necessary, and leave it for only one growing season. Make sure that the staking equipment is loose on your tree allowing it to move in slight winds. Movement in a tree in the first few years of growth will help it to establish better and stronger roots.