



Arbor Hills
Tree Farm, LLC

Choosing the right Tree?

Tree selection is one of the most important decisions a home owner makes when landscaping a home. Considering that most trees have the potential to outlive the people who plant them, the impact of this decision is one that can influence a lifetime. We at Arbor Hills are here to help and make it a very rewarding process.

The question most frequently asked of us “Which kind of tree do you think I should plant?” Before this question can be answered, a number of factors need to be considered. Think about the following questions:

- Why is the tree being planted? Do you want the tree to provide shade, seasonal color, or act as a windbreak? Maybe you just don’t want to look at the neighbor’s house or a busy street.
- What is the size and location of the planting site? Does the space lend itself to a large, medium, or small tree? Are there overhead or belowground wires or utilities in the vicinity? Do you need to consider clearance for sidewalks, patios, or driveways? Are there other trees in the area? Are there barriers to future root growth, such as building foundations?
- Which type of soil conditions exist? Is the soil deep, fertile, and well drained, or is it shallow, compacted, and infertile?
- How much do I want to spend?

Asking and answering these before selecting a tree will help you choose the “right tree for the right place.”

Tree Function

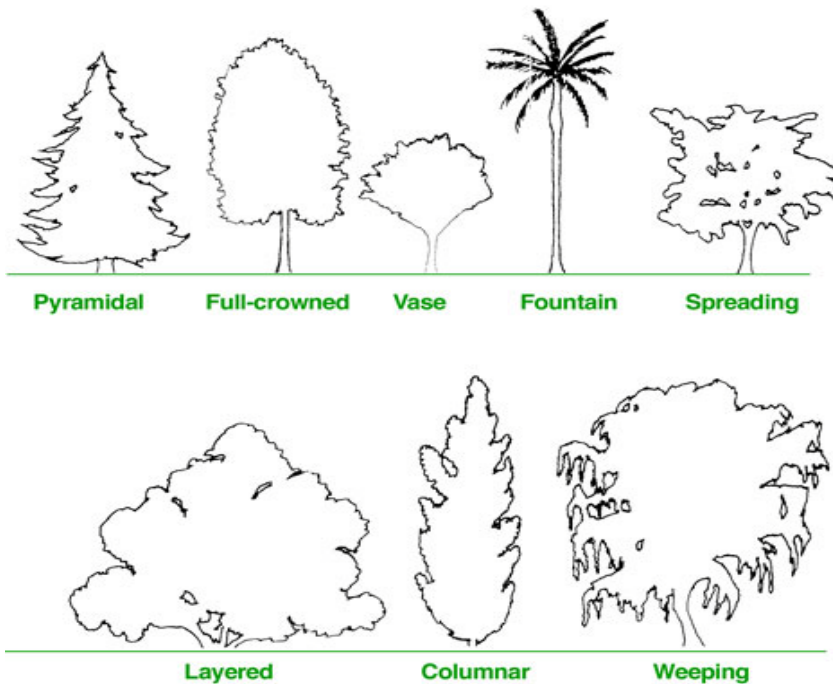
Trees make our surroundings more pleasant. Properly placed and cared for, trees increase the value of our real estate and prove to be very rewarding to watch a tree mature year after year. A shade tree provides relief from summer’s heat and, when properly placed, can reduce summer cooling costs. An ornamental tree provides beautiful flowers, leaves, or bark. Evergreens with dense, persistent leaves can be used to provide a windbreak or a screen for privacy. A tree that drops its leaves in the fall allows the sun to warm a house in the winter. A tree or shrub that produces small fruit can provide food to attract birds and wildlife into your home landscape. Street trees decrease the glare from pavement, reduce runoff, filter out pollutants, and add oxygen to the air we breathe. Street trees also improve the overall appearance and quality of life in a city or neighborhood.



Form and Size

A basic principle of modern architecture is “form follows function.” This is a good rule to remember when selecting a tree. Selecting the right form (shape) to complement the desired function (what you want the tree to do) can significantly reduce maintenance costs and increase the tree’s value in the landscape. When making a selection about form, also consider mature tree size. Trees grow in a variety of sizes and shapes, as shown below. Trees can vary in height from a few feet to several hundred feet. (See arborhilltrees.com for tree sizes at maturity in Nebraska)

Depending on your budget you can choose from among hundreds of combinations of form and size. You may choose a small-spreading tree in a location with overhead utility lines. You may select a narrow, columnar form to provide a screen between two buildings. You may choose large, vase-shaped trees to create an arbor over a driveway or city street.





Site Conditions

Selecting a tree that will thrive in a given set of site conditions is the key to long-term tree growth rate and appearance. The following is a list of the major site conditions to consider before selecting a tree for planting:

- soil conditions
- exposure (sun and wind)
- human activity
- space constraints
- hardiness zones

Soil Conditions

In urban sites, the topsoil often has been disturbed and frequently is shallow and compacted. Holes should be dug the same depth of the root ball and approximately 5-10" larger than the tree root ball. The more hard packed the soil is the slower the growth. Amend the existing soil with topsoil or sand if heavy compacted clay is present. Planting trees in a berm can also be a major benefit to the tree's growth rate and overall success. Conversely, planting a new tree in the same location the old tree was removed may hinder the new tree's growth rate.

Exposure

The amount of sunlight available will affect tree species selection for a particular location. Most trees require full sunlight for proper growth and flower bloom. Some do well in light shade, but few tree species perform well in dense shade. Exposure to wind is also a consideration. Wind can dry out soils, causing drought conditions and damage to branches and leaves during storms, and can actually uproot newly planted trees that have not had an opportunity to establish root systems. Staking may be needed to establish young trees.

Human Activity

Things people do: soil compaction, under watering, over watering, can account for more tree problems than all insect and disease-related issues combined.



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Space Constraints

Many different factors can limit the planting space available to the tree: overhead or underground utilities, pavement, buildings, other trees, visibility. Make sure there is adequate room for the tree you select to grow to maturity.

Hardiness

Hardiness is the plant's ability to survive in the extreme temperatures of the particular geographic region in which you are planting the tree. Plants can be cold hardy, heat tolerant, or both. Most plant reference books provide a map of hardiness zone ranges. Zone 5-6 is acceptable for Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa. Before you make your final decision, make sure the plant you have selected is "hardy" in your area.

Species Selection

Personal preferences, cost, and availability play a major role in the selection process. Now that your homework is done, you are ready to select a species for the planting site you have chosen. Use the information you have gathered, call your local tree supplier, and balance it with the aesthetic decisions you make related to your personal preferences.

The trees you select must be suitable for the geographic region (hardy), tolerant to the moisture and drainage conditions of your soil, be resistant to pests in your area, and have the right form and size for the site and function you have envisioned.

ArborCARE

Arbor Hills offers a comprehensive fertilization program to improve the quality of your trees. Studies have shown dramatic growth improvement when fertilization is introduced early in tree's life cycle. Trees can deplete minerals & nutrients from the soil needed to be healthy. Typically half of your trees roots are within 6" of the surface and the majority of the roots are within 18" of the surface. Our 20-20-20 Plus Fertilizer is injected directly into this root zone which then replenishes minerals & nutrients needed for the tree to thrive. We also add an organic liquid to increase root vigor. ArborCARE is the right solution for your trees to keep them beautiful & healthy.



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What you get with ArborCARE's Spring & Fall program:

- Slow release fertilizer injected into each tree's root zone twice per year – Spring & Fall
- Faster tree growth
- Rapid new root development
- More robust leaf production
- FREE inspection, evaluation & report of any insect or disease problems

Spring

- Specially balanced slow release fertilizer formulated for young trees. Helps the trees push out new growth.

Fall

- Balanced quick and slow release deep-root fertilizer specially formulated for trees & shrubs. Helps the roots maintain strength for winter hardiness and early spring perk-up.

Cost

- One time charge of \$75 for up to 10 trees/site. (Add \$10 for any additional tree)

We hope this short e book was helpful. Selecting trees can be fun and satisfying. Call us to answer any question you may have. We are also happy to come to your site and make recommendations for tree planting.

Plant a tree today for tomorrow!

This guide is one in a series published by the International Society of Arboriculture as part of its Consumer Information Program and has been enhanced and provided to you by Arbor Hills Tree Farm, LLC. Please contact us with any questions or for your next tree purchase!

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