

## Craneridge Guide to Tree Planting Success

### Choosing a location

Different trees grow better under different conditions, so it is important to pair the correct tree species with your yard's habitat.

When planting a tree, make sure it is clear of any utilities in the area, both above and below ground. Envision a mature tree, what height it will grow to as well as its canopy spread. It is suggested that a tree be planted no closer than ten feet from any underground utility, and a minimum of fifteen feet from the foundation of a house. Trees should not be planted under overhead utility lines and should stay twenty-five feet from the sides of the lines. Keep in mind that the utility companies have jurisdiction on whether a tree is in danger of lines and possess the rights to remove or prune the tree if needed. If you are unsure of where underground utilities lie, call 811 for a no-cost utility location.

Next, note the amount of sunlight the potential planting site receives each day. Some trees do better than others in shady areas, while others require hours of direct sunlight to grow.

Lastly, observe the quantity of natural water the area receives. This will help determine if routine watering is necessary after the roots have been established. Some trees are drought tolerant, and some can withstand periods of flooding with standing water.

It is good practice to test the acidity (pH) of the soil to further ensure the success of your plantings. If the pH is out of balance, the tree may not do well. For more details, visit the [SUNY ESF website](#). Soil tests can be affordably done using [local laboratories](#). Trees that are native to the area do best with a wide variety of soil conditions.

### Selecting the tree

After you have determined how much sunlight and water are in your area and the growing boundaries, then it's time to select a tree that fits the criteria. Check out this helpful [native tree landscaping guide](#) ★ Some options are listed below.

**For areas that are shady:** choose Black-Gum, Hop-Hornbeam, Maple (Sugar or Snakebark), Paw-Paw, Yellow Birch, Arborvitae, Dogwood, and Hackberry. These trees prefer moist, well-drained soil.

**For areas in partial shade to full sun:** choose Maple (Red or Silver), Oak (Red, White, Pin), Cherry (Black, Pin), American Sycamore, Bigtooth Aspen, Poplar (American or Tulip), Basswood (American Linden), Birch (Yellow, Paper, or River), Cedar, and Eastern White Pine.

**For areas with full sun:** plant American Pecan, Aspen (Big Tooth or Quaking), Black Cherry, Blue Spruce, Chestnut, Cottonwood, Eastern Redbud, Hickory

(Pignut or Shagbark), Honey Locust, Larch, or Oak (Red, Swamp, White).

**For areas that are wet or swampy:**

choose American Pecan, Black Ash, River Birch, Swamp White Oak, White Cedar, and Willow.

**Planting procedure**

A tree will die or be stunted if planting does not follow best practices.

Trees have two types of roots, lateral roots, and taproot/heart roots. Lateral roots grow outward, very close to the surface to provide the tree with oxygen, water, and nutrients. Tap roots provide an anchor for the tree. When digging the hole for your tree, make sure it is twice as wide as the lateral roots, and as deep as the tree collar/ root flare. A wide hole allows room for the lateral roots to span outward, while proper depth ensures the tree roots don't suffocate.

Additionally, a tree tube with stake support is a good way to keep your tree free from deer or animal grazing.

Water your new trees thoroughly, several times a week. A good rule is three gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter per watering. This should be continued until the roots are established (after a full year). Do not use fertilizer within the first year of planting.

Lastly, make a 2–3 foot mulch ring around your tree without touching the bark to help keep moisture in the soil and prevent competing weeds and grasses.

**Questions?** Contact a member of the Woodlands Committee or visit the [Craneridge Woodlands](#) or [Woodlands Resources webpages](#).

