



Deciduous Shrub and Tree Care

Deciduous trees and shrubs are simply those that shed their leaves at the end of each growing season, as opposed to evergreens that keep their foliage year around.

Growth Rates

After a year getting acclimated to a new location, a healthy deciduous plant can add up 6" to 6' of new growth per year. The first year's growth may be less, since newly planted plants must first re-establish their root systems before putting on new growth. It is worth noting that when you are buying a deciduous tree or shrub, you should pay more attention to the root system and the health of the branching structure and not so much the pretty top growth. Healthy roots support healthy growth rates.

Soil Types and Conditions

Deciduous plants like higher variety of soil conditions based on sun/shade exposure. The best solution is to have a soils test of your planting site. You could also see what is growing in your local neighborhood. Another simple way is to refer to you local nursery. They are a great guide to identify plants that do well in our climate and soil type, refer to fertilization for changing soil conditions.

Pruning

As with all plants, you should have a plan before doing any pruning. Other than removing any damaged branches, do not prune a plant until it has been in the ground a full growing season. We feel all plants need all their buds to provide leaves for gathering energy to grow. Therefore, the first year trim for health, the second year trim for aesthetics and the third year maintain shape, growth habit and aesthetics by focusing on the plant as a composition with the surrounding environment. Pruning with electric or gas powered shears is frowned upon except to keep clean hedges. Excessive shearing can stunt natural growth habit and be detrimental to health. We don't recommend using any wound sealant as in most cases; clean, unsealed wounds heal more quickly and with less disease than those covered with pruning paint.

Most deciduous plants should be pruned after flowering has occurred, in May and June. Many deciduous trees it is best to prune in February, you are able to see the shape and problems better.

General Planting Tips

Spring planting is best done just after frost leaves the ground, the weather is still cool, and lots of spring rain is expected. Planting during hot, dry weather may cause "transplant shock", so either avoid planting in hot, dry weather or make sure the trees get adequate water. Fall is a great time to plant and our favorite! When planting evergreen trees in the fall, the trees experience less stress during the digging and shipping process because they've gone dormant in preparation for winter. Fall planting also gives the trees plenty of time to become acclimated to their new environment and for the dirt to properly settle around the roots. And finally, fall gives the plants a head start when the ground begins to thaw. Spring is obviously a fine and popular time to plant, but fall certainly has its advantages.

Plant all new evergreens slightly higher than existing soil to allow for good drainage and cover rootball with 2" of double ground organic mulch.