

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Office of Resource Conservation
URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM
TREE PLANTING GUIDE AND STANDARDS

A. PRE-PLANTING AND TREE SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Site Analysis
 - a. Identify the Soil series by consulting with your Natural Resources Conservation Service representative or describe in detail the soil characteristics.
 - b. Special soil considerations (such as excessive water, standing water) must be identified prior to planting.
 - c. Call JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) 1-800-892-0123 or other appropriate utility locators to determine the existence of underground utilities.
 - d. Observe and record additional site restrictions.
 - e. Species and site information must be analyzed to determine if the species matches the site.

B. TREE and SITE SELECTION STANDARDS

TREES

1. All tree species must be selected and matched to site.
2. No park grade trees shall be utilized.
3. Planting stock shall be free of insect and disease problems.
4. Trees with known incompatible grafts shall not be used.
5. Containerized stock, balled and burlapped trees and transplanted trees will have a minimum of 3/4 inch caliper and a maximum of a 3" caliper and will meet or exceed American Standards for Nursery Stock. Use of seedlings or the transplanting of larger trees will need prior approval.
6. All excessive soils above root flare including excessive soil packed above the root flare must be removed before or during tree planting.

SITE SELECTION

1. Adequate space shall be provided to allow for unobscured and non-detrimental growth of the tree.
2. The following guides shall be used unless otherwise specified in a local ordinance:
 - a. Right of ways must have a minimum of five feet.
 - b. Trees shall not be planted within 30 feet of a corner or traffic intersection.
 - c. Trees shall not be planted within 15 feet of a utility pole.
 - d. Trees between the height of 25 and 40 feet may not be planted closer than 20 feet of a utility line.
 - e. Only small trees of less than 25 feet or 10 feet less than the height of the overhead utility line can be planted within 20 feet of a utility line.
 - f. Large trees with a mature height of over 40 feet can be planted no closer to the utility line than 30-50 feet depending upon species.

C. TREE PLANTING TECHNIQUES

1. Trees shall be planted with the root flare at grade for all areas except those areas with excessive water.
2. In areas where seepage is a problem, the first priority will be to select flood plain species or trees that are resistant to excessive water. A secondary strategy will be to plant the trees no higher than 2-3 inches above grade as long as those sites are re-graded to help avoid exposure of the original B&B ball or tree roots.
3. Tree planting details
 - a. The original soil unless it lacks the basic properties necessary to grow plants, shall be used instead of amendments.
 - b. Nylon, ropes, nylon-based burlap shall be removed prior to tree planting.
 - c. Non-nylon based burlap and wire baskets shall be removed from the top two-thirds of the planting hole. Once the tree planting is complete, exposed burlap or ropes will be considered unacceptable.
 - d. Trees shall be watered after planting to eliminate air pockets.
 - e. Trees should have a donut shaped mulch ring placed around them no

higher than 4 inches.

D. POST-PLANTING TREE CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Trees shall not be staked unless the site is subject to high winds and has unstable soils. Stakes shall be removed within the first year after planting.
2. During the first and second years after planting, trees shall be watered as to provide enough water to saturate the top one foot of soil within the drip line once every ten to fourteen days if adequate rainfall has not occurred.
3. Trees should receive fine pruning according to American National Standards Institute plus National Arborist Association or International Society of Arboriculture standards as needed during the first five years after planting.
4. Trees shall be inspected monthly for insect and disease and stress. Corrective action shall be taken.
5. In no case, should the tree wrap be kept on for more than one year. Tree wrap shall be removed immediately after planting or according to the following criteria:
 - a) at the time of planting if planted during the rainy season,
 - b) for late spring plantings, remove after one summer season,
 - c) if planted in the fall, by early spring to avoid the potential of fungus canker.

Any deviation from the standards must have prior approval and must be requested in writing to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Resource Conservation - Urban and Community Forestry Program, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271.