



Bookcliff Gardens

nursery & landscape

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Shade and Ornamental Trees

Location and Selection

Be careful to choose the right-sized tree for the area you have in mind. Even though they may all look the same size when you buy them, trees grow to different sizes. If you're looking for shade, a larger tree is generally best. If your area is smaller, a blooming ornamental tree will fill the area and provide a bonus of colorful flowers or fruit. Understand too, that there are "good" trees, and there are fast-growing trees, but there are really no good, fast-growing trees. You'll need to decide what is more important to you. The fast-growing trees (Poplars, Cottonwoods, Willows, and the like) grow very fast and give shade quickly, but they can have more problems with insects, diseases, shallow aggressive roots, and weak branching. The more moderately growing trees take longer to get to size, but are generally more carefree.

Planting

Dig a hole twice as wide and only as deep as the rootball of the tree. Be sure to adjust the hole so that the top of the rootball is 1" to 2" above ground level. Next, remove the container. Plastic pots can be removed by turning the plant upside down or laying it on its side and gently tapping at the pot until the plant slides out. Fiber pots are easily removed by placing the plant in the hole and cutting around the bottom of the pot. Then slit the pot vertically and carefully peel the sides off. Refill the hole with a blended mixture of 1/3 **Soil Pep** and 2/3 of your garden soil. Firm the backfill by tamping it gently. Build a watering basin around the plant high enough to hold 3" to 4" of water. Make the basin at least as wide as the hole that was dug. Immediately water the tree deeply by filling the basin with water once, letting it soak in, and filling it up a second time. If the tree is in a lawn, remove the basin after this initial watering. The use of **Fertilome Root Stimulator** at planting time will

greatly reduce transplant shock and encourage your trees to resume their normal growing habits more quickly.

Feeding

No additional fertilizer is usually needed the first year the tree is planted. Once the tree has established itself, it can be fertilized with **Bookcliff Gardens Choice Professional Turf Food**. Apply it in late April after irrigation water is available and again in mid June. Be sure to water it in well after applying. Iron supplements may be needed for certain trees. Use **Fertilome Liquid Iron** two to four times in the spring and early summer. The iron will do the most good if it's applied at the same time as the Professional Turf Food.

Pruning

Most trees require little, if any pruning to maintain desired shape and vigor. Pruning is best confined to removal of dead, diseased, unsightly, or competing branches. Most pruning is best done in early spring. Many people like to remove the lowest branches of a tree to make it possible to walk underneath the tree. This should be done gradually, only removing a couple branches each year. When pruning, it's very important that the pruning cut is made outside of the branch collar. If you're unsure about where to make the cut, come see us at Bookcliff Gardens.

Watering

It is impossible to give a watering schedule that will be right for everyone all of the time. Factors such as the soil type, how big the plant is, how fast the plant is growing, air temperature, humidity, wind and light intensity all will affect how often a particular plant will need watering.

The basic rule of thumb is to water deeply, but infrequently. Get the water down a minimum of 18" at each watering. This encourages the plant to develop a deep, drought tolerant root system. Then give the soil a chance to dry slightly between waterings. It is common for people to kill or unnecessarily stress their plants by watering too frequently. The roots of a plant require oxygen in order to function. If the soil is constantly waterlogged, there is not enough oxygen available to the root system and the roots suffocate and begin to die.

Knowing this, our recommendation is to water deeply by building a basin around trees that are not watered by lawn sprinklers. It should be wide enough to accommodate the root system of the plant (generally out to the drip line of the plant) and high enough to hold three or four inches of water when full. Remember that this basin will need to be enlarged as the tree grows. Fill the basin full, let it soak in, and fill it a second time. Then don't water the plant again until the soil in the basin begins to dry. Don't just look at the soil surface, dig down 4" to 6" to see how dry the soil is. The soil should be showing some significant drying down at that depth. One little trick is to scoop up a handful of soil from that depth and squeeze it into a ball. If the ball holds its shape after you let go, the soil is still wet. If the ball

falls apart, it's time to water. Using this method several times, you will be able to determine your own watering schedule.

For plants that will be watered with lawn sprinklers, water as described above at planting time. Then remove the basin. Most of the plant's day-to-day water needs will be met by the lawn watering. However, a deep soaking every month or two is recommended in addition to the lawn watering. In addition, during the winter a monthly deep soaking of all newly planted trees is a good idea. This should be done for the first two winters after planting.

Pests

Most disease and insect problems should be dealt with as they appear. Because of the variety of possible problems, proper diagnosis is very important. Bring in an affected plant sample to Bookcliff Gardens where we can diagnose the problem and prescribe proper treatment. An application of **Fertilome Dormant Oil Spray** in early March can help prevent lots of problems in the coming season as well.