

Planting Trees in the Fall

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We usually think of planting trees in the spring rather than the fall. But there may be advantages to fall planting. During the spring, soils are cold and may be so wet that low oxygen levels inhibit root growth. The warm and moist soils associated with fall encourage root growth. Fall root growth means the tree becomes established well before a spring-planted tree and is better able to withstand summer stresses. Certain trees do not produce significant root growth during the fall

months and are better planted in the spring. These include beech, birch, redbud, magnolia, tulip poplar, willow oak, scarlet oak, black oak, willows and dogwood.

Fall-planted trees require some special care. Remember that roots are actively growing even though the top is dormant. Make sure the soil stays moist but not soggy. This may require watering not only in the fall but also during the winter months if we experience warm spells that dry the soil. Mulch also is helpful because it minimizes moisture loss and slows the freezing of the soil so root growth continues as long as possible.

Evergreens should be moved earlier in the fall than deciduous plants. They need at least six weeks before the ground freezes for the roots to become established.

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