



TREE PLANTING



The Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District is a subdivision of state government and is funded primarily by the City of Indianapolis / Marion County government. The District works to assist county residents and others with a host of natural resource issues and concerns. These Conservation Fact Sheets are provided to assist people to better care for the land.

Why Plant Trees?

Trees can provide beauty and structure to your landscape while offering other benefits to you and the environment. Trees can reduce your heating and cooling costs, provide shelter while outdoors, clean the air, offer wildlife habitat, and add value to your property.



Photo courtesy of: USDA NRCS

How to Plant A Tree:

1. Although a tree can be planted nearly any time of year, the ideal time to plant is early fall. Late winter or early spring is the second best choice.
2. Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly shallower than the root ball. Loosen the soil on the sides and bottom of the hole using a gardening rake or shovel.
3. Carefully remove the plant from its container, burlap, or plastic. Loosen the root system and shorten extremely long roots. Locate the root flare (where the roots begin to branch off the trunk).
4. Plant the tree so that the root flare is at or just above grade level and roots are facing downward and outward. Avoid drying root tips.
5. Fill in the hole, lightly tapping the soil or adding water to settle it.
6. Create a temporary water basin around the trunk and water thoroughly.
7. Add 1-2 inches of mulch around the tree without touching the trunk. Too much moisture around the trunk will encourage disease.

What Kind of Tree Should I Plant?

- Native species are more tolerant of site conditions, will live longer, and benefit wildlife more than exotic species.
- The tree must be appropriate for the site (size, longevity, form, leaf color, fruit, planting and maintenance requirements). **Make sure to consider buildings, power lines, and any other easements nearby.**
- It should provide enjoyment for you as the homeowner, so consider its appearance and function in your landscape.

Early Maintenance:

Once planted, trees must have plenty of water to promote deep root growth. For the first two years, trees should be watered after a week of dry weather. Wilted leaves are a key sign of moisture stress. Water trees slowly enough that the water soaks in rather than runs off. Do not fertilize in the first two years. Fertilizing will promote shoot growth instead of root growth. Only fertilize after this period if your soil requires extra nutrients (this can be discovered easily by a soil test). Keep the area beneath the tree mulched and free of other plants that may steal moisture from the new planting.

For more information about tree planting visit the Plant-A-Million web site at: www.plantamillion.org/



Photo courtesy of: USDA