



# Nursery News

October 2007 - Research & Development

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## Fall *IS* For Planting

With the right kind of weather, Fall is the ideal landscaping season. The early fall soil is usually warmer and more workable than spring soils, and there can be more time to work outside. Cool air helps the plants avoid water stress, and rains are usually just enough to provide moisture but not too muddy. Plants are slowing down and preparing for winter, and respond well to transplanting.

### Balance

Trees like to maintain a balance, the roots spread out to supply adequate water and nutrients to the canopy, and the leaves grow to supply the whole tree with energy. Digging trees removes the majority of the root system, and this upsets the tree's natural equilibrium between the root system and canopy, and the tree compensates somewhere.



To regain the balance, the tree can choose to produce more roots to keep up the water supply, or shed leaves to reduce the water loss by transpiration. A tree that has been dug can maintain its canopy until it is ready to be planted if the needed water is supplied to the roots, and growing and digging methods are focused on maximizing roots in the root-ball. Once the tree is in the ground with the right conditions, the roots can be grown to replace those lost.

### Fall Shrubs

Most deciduous shrubs can be dug and planted in the fall. If they are container grown, the sooner they are in the ground, the better. Containerized plants are convenient because they can be moved and planted at any time, but they require a little different care. The mix used in most containers is an ideal growing environment, so the roots are not as encouraged to spread out into the surrounding soil. The container mix can also become dry when the surrounding soil pulls away moisture, so it is important to supply adequate water to the plant. Fall transplants should be watered until the ground freezes.



### Fall Evergreens

Most narrow-leaved evergreens can be dug and planted in the fall, but should be planted early fall as well, preferably before October. Evergreens are especially sensitive to water shortages because they continue to transpire over the winter. Make sure they are deeply watered weekly until the ground freezes.



### Rooting In

Most fall transplants, with the proper mulching, will continue root tip growth if the soil is warm enough. Trees differ in the rate of root replacement, some root slower than others, and some have difficulties rooting in. These trees will be 'on hold' until the spring soils warm sufficiently. Examples of trees that are slower replacing roots are Oaks, Hemlock, Fir, Magnolia, Tuliptree, Birch, Ginkgo, and



Redbud. Each group of trees is unique in its physiology and responds differently to transplanting.

To make the most out of the fall season, knowing how trees respond differently to transplanting, and selecting the right trees can reduce losses. For fall planting mulch, water adequately, and hope for a good winter!



### Fall Trees

Following is an example of trees that can be planted in fall preferably by the end of October:

- Amur Maple
- Crabapple
- Prunus species
- Birch
- Pagoda Dogwood
- Willow



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### Planting Spring Only Plants in Summer and Fall

Most commercially available trees can be dug in the fall. Below is a list of those trees that can be planted in the fall if they have been dug in the spring and maintained over the summer.

Spring Only Dig Recommended:

- Beech
- Birch
- Black Tupelo
- Butternut, Walnut
- Hornbeam
- Hawthorns
- Hophornbeam American
- Katsura Tree
- Magnolias
- Oaks
- Ornamental Dogwoods
- Pawpaw
- Pears
- Red Maples
- Tuliptree
- White Fringetree
- Willow

 **SUMMER CAMP FOR TREES** program for our Frequent Buyers is a great option for having Spring dug trees available throughout the year. Our professional team digs, cares for, and maintains orders for future delivery. Trees are dug at the correct time and conditioned for maximum landscape survival. A monthly charge covers complete care including white poly shrink wrap, untying and spacing, drip fertigation, plant health monitoring, and preparation for delivery including reurlapping if necessary. Please call for more information.

### Summer Digging

If done properly, nurseries can dig many plants in the summer. Trees are partially dug in the cool mornings with the holes irrigated to supplement water to the cut roots. The following morning the digging is finished and the trees are moved immediately to shade. Following is a list of plants that can be dug in the summer if properly dug and maintained.

Possible Summer Dig:

- Arborvitae
- Douglas Fir
- Most Maples
- Pine
- Spruce
- Most Viburnums
- Yew



### Transplant Success

#### 1. Quality: source, plants, people

Digging, shipping, and handling stresses plants. Plants do not always show signs of stress immediately. They can look perfectly fine when unloaded, but careless handling and storage along the way can weaken the plant enough to make it susceptible to pests and diseases.

#### 2. Water, water, water

Vigor can be restored to transplants by providing adequate water. Usually 1-2 inches per week is sufficient, but more is needed during hot or dry weather and for container plants to make the root transition into the surrounding soil profile. Water slow, deep and thoroughly. Do not over water, water-logged soil can't "breathe", and runoff can be a problem. Water stressed plants are also more susceptible to pests and diseases, so providing the right amount of water protects plants from future problems.

#### 3. Mulch

Three to four inches of mulch are recommended over the root ball, away from the trunk. An additional 2 inches of mulch in the fall can help certain trees over the winter by acting as an insulating cover for the root-zone. Excess can be removed in the spring. The importance of mulch cannot be overemphasized for fall planting.



### Seasons

When the seasons begin or end changes from year to year from a tree standpoint. Optimal digging time can vary within a matter of days or weeks depending on location and climate. Growers use past experience and growing degree-days records to know when it is the best time to dig.

## Green Tech Support Team

If you have a concern about plant needs, pests, siting or general plant health, we can help. We offer a site-visit service for any questions about how our plants are doing in their new location.

See [www.beesongrows.com/GreenTech.html](http://www.beesongrows.com/GreenTech.html) for more information