

Yard Trees

2024

Overview

Yard trees offer a variety of benefits to homeowners. These benefits include reduced energy costs and increased home value, among others.

What is a Yard Tree

- For the purposes of this document, a “yard tree” is referring to a **tree or similar woody plant grown on small-scale residential lots.**

Getting Started with Yard Trees

- **Step 1:** Check your local codes.
 - Before doing anything, **check local codes** to see what rules are in place regarding planting trees. Although a permit is not usually required, some cities use stricter regulations or zoning rules that need an application before planting (Plant Native).
- **Step 2:** Selecting a tree.
 - **Native trees offer a wide variety of benefits** over non-native or invasive species (see Native Trees sheet for more information).
 - Native trees also have the **potential to require less maintenance** over time while promoting other native wildlife in the area (Tree of Life Nursery).
 - There are many **resources available** to find out what plants are native to an area, as well as how to care for them. These resources include the [Native Plant Finder](#) from the National Wildlife Foundation and the [Native Plants Database](#) from the National Audubon Society.
 - The [Arbor Day Foundation](#) also provides a tool to **select trees that will be resilient** within a certain climate zone.
- **Step 3:** Planting.
 - Location is important when planting a yard tree, with location requirements varying from species to species. Important elements to consider are:
 - **Sunlight: Most trees that produce fruit and nuts need between 6-8 hours of direct sunlight each day**, while non-flowering trees can tolerate reduced light exposure (Grow Organic).
 - **Soil Quality: Well-draining soil is usually preferable** when planting a tree, with trees in waterlogged areas being less likely to survive. Plant health can also be affected by soil pH, which can be tested with at-home kits (Grow Organic).
 - **Air Circulation: Trees generally grow better when they have room away from solid masses** like walls or fences that obstruct air flow (Grow Organic).
 - **Spacing: Similar to air circulation, if the tree is too close to other objects or plants, it’s growth can be obstructed** (Grow Organic).

- If the tree has already developed a root system, it is important that it is planted into a hole that is around **twice as wide as the spread-out roots**. The depth of the hole should **place the base of the trunk level with the top of the soil** (Grow Organic).
- **Step 4: Continued Care.**
 - Trees had a wide variety of needs regarding continued care. While some can be left to survive off of rain and sunlight, others may **require further maintenance with pruning**, fertilizing, and so on. The Tree Guide from the Arbor Day Foundation can provide a breakdown of what a tree species needs in both planting and maintenance.

Benefits of Yard Trees

- Trees can have a **substantial impact on property value**. It is estimated that trees produce around \$31.5 billion a year on home value across the United States (University of Nebraska-Lincoln).
- Trees near homes can **reduce air conditioning needs by %30 and save up to %50 in energy costs** used for heating (Arbor Day Foundation).
- Roadside trees can **reduce indoor pollution of nearby homes by up to %50** (Arbor Day Foundation).

Case Studies

The Economic Footprint and Quality-of-Life Benefits of Urban Forestry in the United States: United States

- Urban trees contributed to an estimated \$31.5 billion of home value nationwide. These trees provided an estimated \$73 billion in environmental benefits such as reduced air pollution and reduced stormwater runoff.

Urban Forest Case Studies: Sacramento, California

- The Sacramento Municipal Utility District found that three large trees, positioned with two on the west and one on the east of a home, can reduce energy costs by around %30 percent in the summer. These same trees can also reduce heating by an estimated two to %2-8 in the winter.

Resources

Websites

- Native Plant Finder (National Wildlife Foundation) : <https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org/Plants>
- Native Plant Database (National Audubon Society): <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants/search?zipcode=32210&tab=best-results>
- Choosing the Right Tree (Arbor Day Foundation): <https://www.arborday.org/trees/index-choosing.cfm>
- Tree Facts (Arbor Day Foundation): <https://www.arborday.org/trees/treefacts/>

How To's

- Planting Bare Root Trees for Beginners (Grow Organic): <https://www.groworganic.com/blogs/articles/planting-bare-root-trees-for-beginners-a-comprehensive-guide>
- The Tree Guide (Arbor Day Foundation): <https://www.arborday.org/trees/treeguide/>

References

- Arbor Day Foundation (n.d.). *Choosing the Right Tree*. <https://www.arborday.org/trees/index-choosing.cfm>
- Arbor Day Foundation (n.d.). *The Tree Guide*. <https://www.arborday.org/trees/treeguide/>
- Arbor Day Foundation (n.d.). *Tree Facts*. <https://www.arborday.org/trees/treefacts/>
- Grow Organic (n.d.). *Planting Bare Root Trees for Beginners: A Comprehensive Guide*. <https://www.groworganic.com/blogs/articles/planting-bare-root-trees-for-beginners-a-comprehensive-guide>
- National Audubon Society (n.d.). *Native Plants Database*. Audubon. <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants/search?zipcode=32210&tab=best-results>
- National Wildlife Federation (n.d.). *Native Plant Finder*. Native Plant Finder. <https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org/Plants>
- Plant Native (n.d.). *Do You Need A Permit To Plant Privacy Trees?* <https://plantnative.org/do-you-need-a-permit-to-plant-privacy-trees.htm>
- Tree of Life Nursery (2008, March 14). *Case Study: Altamira Project*. California Native Plants. <https://californianativeplants.com/blog/california-native-plants/case-study-altamira/>
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2021, October 8). *Study: Trees have \$31.5 billion impact on home values each year*. Nebraska Today. <https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/study-trees-have-315-billion-impact-on-home-values-each-year/>
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln, United States Department of Agriculture, United States Forestry Service (2021, October 8). *The Economic Footprint and Quality-of-Life Benefits of Urban Forestry in the United States*. Arbor Day. <https://www.arborday.org/urban-forestry-economic/downloads/key-findings.pdf>
- Werts, M. (2013, May 2). *The Energy Savings of Trees*. <https://www.americanforests.org/article/the-energy-savings-of-trees/#:~:text=According%20to%20research%2C%20just%20three%20large%20trees%20planted,in%20the%20winter%20by%20two%20to%20eight%20percent.>