

Weekly Column for week of 01-18-10  
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## **Trees and Shrubs in the Landscape**

In the past two articles, I have talked about adding flowers to your plans for your garden or lawn. In the spirit of continuing the theme of planning, I must not forget to mention trees and shrubs, which are also important components of the yard. There are many things to consider when deciding to plant trees or shrubs. These are long term investments in your yard. You should consider how big they will eventually become – especially trees. This will also give you a good idea about how wide the root system will be one day.

Planning to plant a tree or shrub means basically trying to picture the future when it is fully grown. It is also helpful to have an idea of what role the tree or shrub will play. Will it be used for shade or meant to provide privacy to a window? Will it help to separate two properties or simply stand in all its glory as a magnificent feature in the center of your yard? Trees and shrubs can definitely attract some amazing wildlife, so that would also be a possible reason to plant them.

Observe the spot that you plan to plant a tree or shrub and search for potential problems. For example, if the area pools water, it may not be the best area to plant in, unless the type of tree or shrub you want does well in wet areas. You should be ready to start your search once you have a good location to plant in, have considered the full size of the tree or shrub (including root systems), and have clear expectations of what purpose they will have in the yard.

Most trees and shrubs should be planted in early spring, or in the fall. If they were bought in containers or balled and burlapped where the soil stays with the roots, you have more freedom in planting because they can be planted any time of the year, as long as the soil can be worked. Before trees or shrubs are planted, their roots need to be protected from becoming too dry.

There are so many things to consider when planning to add trees and shrubs to your landscape. However, if carefully planned, they can add joy, splendor, or good old functionality to your yard. If you would like more information on planting or transplanting trees and shrubs, you can visit the web at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-100.pdf>. You can also contact your Elkhart County Extension office for more information.

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