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Homeowner's guide to trees

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Select the Best Site

When choosing a site to plant your tree, be aware of overhead and ground utilities, nearness of structures and roads and the availability and proximity of water. Also think about energy conservation opportunities, aesthetic concerns and available soil surface area for roots.

Select the Best Tree

Look for certain characteristics when choosing a tree to plant. Don’t pick a tree that has been topped or had the central leader cut out, has visible bark wounds, is pot-bound or has roots bulging out. Don’t pick a tree that has discolored leaves and/or symptoms of disease. Choose trees that are healthy and best suited for where it is to be planted.

Plant Your Tree Properly

Even if you have the perfect site and the perfect tree, an improperly planted tree will not do well. Start by turning the soil in an area ten times that of the root ball and till the soil 6-8 inches deep. Dig a hole three times as wide but no deeper than the root ball. Set the tree in the hole and refill it with the native soil you removed. Lightly compact the soil. Establish a water-ring around the perimeter of the hole.

Maintain Your Tree

Mulch 2-3 inches deep around the tree leaving a 6-inch buffer directly around the trunk. No mulch should touch the base of the tree. Stake the tree with 3-inches of slack and do not let wires directly touch the trunk. Remove the stakes after the first growing season. Water your tree with 4-5 gallons once a week during the summer of the first growing season and after that as needed. Native trees should not require fertilizer. Do not prune for the first two years.

Tree Sources

Trees listed as “Best Natives” in this brochure can be purchased at local nurseries including Thompson’s Gardens and Wise Nurseries.

For More Information

For more information on Tree Smarts, please visit Georgia Southern Botanical Garden’s website at http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/garden

Tree Smarts is a collaborative project funded by the Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program administered by the Georgia Forestry Commission. Participants include Georgia Southern Botanical Garden, Keep Bulloch Beautiful, the Bulloch Council of Garden Clubs and the Statesboro Regional Library.
Best Natives for the Home Landscape

Canopy Trees

**Bald Cypress** (*Taxodium distichum*)
Seasonal Interest: summer, fall color
Conditions: full sun, range of soil types

**Black Tupelo** (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
Seasonal Interest: fall color
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Cabbage Palm** (*Sabal palmetto*)
Seasonal Interest: fragrant summer flowers, winter foliage
Conditions: range of soil types

**Live Oak** (*Quercus virginiana*)
Seasonal Interest: winter foliage, summer shade
Conditions: full sun, range of soil types

**Longleaf Pine** (*Pinus palustris*)
Seasonal Interest: winter foliage, summer shade
Conditions: full sun, range of soil types

**Pond Cypress** (*Taxodium ascendens*)
Seasonal Interest: winter foliage
Conditions: full sun, sandy soils

**Red Maple** (*Acer rubrum*)
Seasonal Interest: fall color
Conditions: full sun, wet to moist soils

**River Birch** (*Betula nigra*)
Seasonal Interest: winter foliage
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Shumard Oak** (*Quercus shumardii*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade, fall colors
Conditions: well-drained soils

**Southern Magnolia** (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade and flowers, winter foliage
Conditions: well-drained soils, tolerates moisture

**Southern Red Oak** (*Quercus falcata*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade, fall colors
Conditions: full sun, poor, dry soil, drought tolerant

**Southern Sugar Maple** (*Acer barbatum*)
Seasonal Interest: fall color
Conditions: full sun, range of soil types, heat tolerant

**Swamp Chestnut Oak** (*Quercus michauxii*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade, fall colors
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Tulip Poplar** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade, fall colors, attracts butterflies
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**White Oak** (*Quercus alba*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade, fall colors, attracts wildlife
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil; don’t plant near pavement

**Winged Elm** (*Ulmus alata*)
Seasonal Interest: summer shade
Conditions: full sun, well-drained soil

Understory Trees

**Flowering Dogwood** (*Cornus florida*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall colors
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Sassafras** (*Sassafras albidum*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall colors
Conditions: dry, well-drained soil

**Fringe Tree** (*Chionanthus virginicus*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall colors
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Carolina Silverbell** (*Halesia carolina*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall colors
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Eastern Redbud** (*Cercis canadensis*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall colors
Conditions: prefers moist, well-drained soil; tolerant of a range of soil types

**Sparkleberry Tree** (*Vaccinium arboreum*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall and winter colors, attracts butterflies
Conditions: drought tolerant

**Downy Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier arborea*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, summer fruit, fall colors
Conditions: prefers wet, but will tolerate range of soil types

**Red Buckeye** (*Aesculus pavia*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, attracts birds and bees
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil

**Possum Haw** (*Ilex decidua*)
Seasonal Interest: spring flowers, fall to winter fruit
Conditions: tolerant of many soil types

**Weeping Yaupon Holly** (*Ilex vomitoria 'pendula'*)
Seasonal Interest: red berries in late winter to spring winter foliage
Conditions: tolerant of many soil types

**Loblolly Bay** (*Gordonia lasianthus*)
Seasonal Interest: large, spring flowers, winter foliage
Conditions: moist, well-drained soil, avoid heavy fertilizer

**Sweet Bay** (*Magnolia virginiana*)
Seasonal Interest: fragrant summer flowers, winter foliage
Conditions: moist to wet soil

*All understory trees prefer sun to partial shade*