

# It's not the end of summer – it's the beginning of planting!

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It's the end of summer, and while the air is getting cool, the soil is not. This is what makes fall such a wonderful time to plant trees and shrubs.

In the fall, heat, water and minerals become less available to trees and shrubs. As they drop their leaves and move into a dormant state for the winter, conditions are ideal for promoting root development.

While some tree species do better when planted in the spring, problems may arise with other species where the tree concentrates its energy on producing leaves and new growth above ground, before its roots can become established and take hold below ground.

By planting trees and shrubs in the fall, young feeder roots can provide the necessary energy and nutrients for the tree to become established, resulting in substantial new growth as soon as the soil begins to warm through in the spring.

When selecting tree and shrub species to plant, you will always have greater success with species native to your area. Choose species that will grow well in your local climate and soil type.

If you are taking advantage of an end-of-season sale at your local nursery, keep in mind that a tree has a better chance of surviving the winter if it is planted in the ground than it does if it remains in a container. The reasons for this are that the soil in a container dries more rapidly, and the roots in a container are subject to greater fluctuations in temperature than the roots of trees in the ground.

So take advantage of this relatively bug-free, cool air season, and plant some trees and shrubs on your property. Deciduous trees can be planted from leaf-fall until the ground freezes up, while coniferous trees can be planted from around the first week of August until the end of October.

There are many good reasons to plant trees and shrubs on your property. Large deciduous trees on the southeast, southwest and west sides of your house can provide a cooling shade in the summer without obstructing the low winter sun, while an evergreen windbreak along the north side of your property will block cold winter winds.

While there may be planting directions specific for your tree species, here are a few planting guidelines you can follow:

- dig a generous hole roughly twice the size of the root ball;
- slide the tree out of the container and gently tear the roots to encourage them to grow out;
- place the tree in the hole, leaving it slightly higher than ground level to allow for settling;
- fill in around the tree with equal part compost and existing soil; and
- water to encourage root growth.

One thing to remember when planting or moving established trees in the fall is to add plenty of finished compost to the hole. You can also add MYKE, a mycorrhizal-based growth stimulant,



to the soil at the time of planting to encourage quick and healthy root development, and adding mulch around the base of your tree will help keep the soil warmer longer allowing more time for root development.

So don't think of it as the end of summer, but the start of an opportunity to add some beauty and privacy to your property by planting some trees and shrubs.

