

What Tree Should I Plant?

Tree selection is one of the most important investment decisions a homeowner makes when landscaping a new home or replacing a tree lost to damage or disease. But before deciding what tree to plant, here are a few factors that need to be considered.

- Why is the tree being planted? Do you want the tree to provide shade, fruit, seasonal color, or act as a windbreak?
- What is the size of the planting site? Does the space lend itself to a large, medium or small tree? Are there overhead wires or below ground utilities? Are there other trees in the area?

Asking and answering these and other questions prior to beginning the selection process will help you determine the “right tree for the right place”.

Tree Function

Properly placed and cared for, trees increase the value of our real estate. For instance, street trees reduce the glare from pavement, reduce run-off, filter out pollutants and add oxygen to the air we breathe. Street trees also improve the overall appearance and quality of life in a city or neighborhood.

Form and Size

Frank Lloyd Wright, the famous architect, once made the comment, “form follows function.” Selecting the right form (shape) to complement the desired function (what you want the tree to do) can significantly reduce maintenance costs and increase the tree’s value in the landscape. Trees grow in a variety of sizes and shapes. Select a form and size that will fit the planting space provided.

This article is the first of a two-part series on Tree Selection. Next time we will look at site conditions, pest problems and species selection. This article is provided as part of a public education campaign on trees in the City of Milpitas. Copyright International Society of Arboriculture. Used with permission.

SIDEBAR The City of Milpitas is currently planting approved city street trees in suitable planting sites in the Manor and adjacent residential neighborhoods. The map illustrates where over 250 new residential street trees have been planted. For more information on city street trees, please contact Public Works at 408-586-2601

