

Fall is the Ideal time to Plant

There are many homeowners who are of the belief that planting trees and shrubs during spring leading into summer is the ideal time. Cool temperatures and adequate rainfall make fall the perfect time for planting. Most shrubs that are planted during spring and summer are often left up to the mercy of high summer temperature and may eventually die. Many people frequently have fears of losing these summer installed plants, and are forced to irrigate them which leave them with an enormous water bills.

When selecting trees and shrubs for the landscape, water conservation should be the top priority. Selecting drought tolerant plants is the first step toward water conservation. For a list of drought tolerant plants that are suitable to our area please contact Osceola County Extension Service. In addition, it is best to plant trees and shrubs early enough in the fall for plants to develop a good root system. Please note that at the time of planting, soil temperatures should be above 55 F at a depth of 6 inches.

When selecting trees and shrubs for fall planting, there are two traditional ways by which plants are available; the balled-and-burlapped method and planting from containers. Select sites that are not under power line or too close to a building structure. It is also important that you gain basic knowledge of the plants before purchasing (don't bring home a stranger). Dig the hole two to three times the diameter of the root ball and no deeper than the depth of the root ball. Tree roots mainly occupy the upper 12 to 18 inches of the soil and grow wide 2 to 3 times the canopy. There is no need to plant trees and shrubs too deep. Always remember that it is proven that the main cause of death of newly planted trees is planting them too deep.

Although there may be no signs of shoot growth during fall going into winter, the roots are still developing and will be ready to take up water during our hot spring temperatures. This condition usually exists until late November in the Central Florida region.

Water plants thoroughly especially during the first few months after planting. Placing mulch around trees and shrubs is very vital for the survival of the plants. Mulch keeps plant roots moist and at the same time creating a cushion that prevents plant roots from freezing. Be care careful not to place mulch more than 4 inches high around the plant, too much mulch can affect the health of the plants.

For more information on this or any other horticultural related topic contact Grantly Ricketts at 321-697-3014 and email at gricketts@ufl.edu or Osceola County Master Gardeners at 321-697-3000.