

Leaf Notes

Spring 2012

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What to Plant/How to Plant

The last few years have been extremely tough on our landscape trees and shrubs. Unusual weather patterns have caused damage to many landscapes. How to manage damaged plant material is a concern. This makes for a perfect opportunity to choose plants, trees, and shrubs that better fit your wants and needs. Although exciting, there are things that you need to take into consideration. Start with location. Every tree and shrub has individual requirements for space, light, and water. Once selected be sure it is planted correctly. There is a saying in our industry that it is better to plant a \$100.00 tree in a \$200.00 hole than to put a \$200.00 tree in a \$100.00 hole. No matter how viable or well suited for the location, it must be planted correctly or both time and money are wasted.



First, dig the hole. The hole should be as deep as the root ball and three times the diameter of the root ball. This gives the roots enough space to radiate out into your landscape. The root system should not be restricted. This could cause root girdling within a few years. Identify the root flair. The root flair is where the roots begin to spread out from the base of the trunk. Often the flair is covered with soil. Remove the soil from around the trunk until the root spread is visible. This will also allow you to determine the correct depth the tree or shrub should be planted. If you neglect these steps, the tree or shrub could be planted too deep and the roots will suffer from a lack of oxygen. Backfill the hole with loose soil. This will ensure that the roots at the flair are level with the existing soil grade. As you backfill the hole, add water to compact the soil which removes large air pockets. You should not need staking, but it may be required. Remember to remove the stake after one year. Now add a layer of mulch no deeper

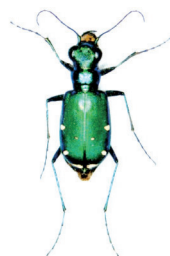
than 4 inches. Spread it evenly over the disturbed area. The layer of mulch will hold moisture in the soil, regulate soil temperature, and keep mechanical damage to a minimum.

Careful maintenance is required from the beginning. Proper irrigation is critical. The amount and timing of irrigation will vary from species to species. On average you will need to water your new plantings once a week for the first year and especially during the summer months. Major pruning should be avoided for one full year. Now, sit back and enjoy your new addition.

Emerald Ash Borer Update

This exotic, attractive pest is on the move and causing devastation on Maryland's Western shore which has now been included in a recent quarantine. The quarantine was implemented to help protect the valuable Riparian Forest of the Eastern Shore. In 2002 the emerald ash borer was first found in trees that were illegally shipped from Michigan to a nursery in Southern Maryland. Panic ensued which resulted in an immediate eradication of all Ash trees within a mile of the nursery where the insect was discovered. The problem was severe enough that the movement of firewood outside the impacted counties was prohibited. Researchers were hopeful that these radical actions would stop the movement of this pest. Unfortunately, the emerald ash borer continued to move and in 2011 was identified in

trees in Allegany, Anne Arundel, and Howard counties. It is believed that moving firewood outside the quarantined areas caused the outbreak to spread.



Ash trees are the preferred host of the emerald ash borer. In Maryland Ash trees are one of the most com-

mon trees found in the forests and in landscapes. It is estimated that in Baltimore City alone approximately 293,000 Ash trees and another 6 million in the surrounding counties. If the emerald ash borer establishes itself in Baltimore, it is estimated that the losses could exceed \$200 million dollars.

Homeowners and the general population who live and travel through these infested areas of the state can become stewards of the environment by following a few simple guidelines. Plant something other than an Ash tree. Don't move firewood outside of the impacted counties. Become more aware of your surroundings. Early detection is critical to the eradication of this pest. Report findings to your Arborist or to the University of Maryland's Home and Garden Information Center HGIC at 1-800-342-2507. Request an inspection of your property. If you have an Ash tree that you value, ask about available treatments against this invader.

Boxwood Blight

The boxwood is one of the most popular landscape plants. They have evergreen foliage during the winter. They are available in many sizes and forms. They are easy to care for. They do well in full sun and in areas of shade. However, a new fungal pathogen has been identified that now threatens all boxwood species both in individual landscapes and in nurseries. The origin of the pathogen is unknown, but it has the potential to devastate boxwood plantings in only one season. Although the foliage is devastated, the root system is not affected. However, the devastation weakens the plant making it vulnerable to other untreatable diseases such as volutella blight or root rot. The English and American boxwood seem to be most susceptible. Spores of the

fungus are produced on both leaf and stem lesions; they are produced on the undersides during moist conditions and are spread by wind or wind-driven rain. Long-distance spread is also likely through movement of infected plants and spores that attach to clothing, equipment, animals or birds. Proper irrigation is an essential defense mechanism for main-



taining their health. Another management strategy is the inspection of new boxwoods at the time of purchase. It is best to quarantine a new purchase for several months before planting. Promote lower humidity and dry leaves

by providing space between plants and by avoiding overhead irrigation. If boxwood blight is confirmed, the infected plant should be removed, placed in a plastic bag and disposed of. Do not compost the infected plant. Fungicide sprays may be used in combination with other described management practices. Thorough coverage of the plant is necessary, but has not been very effective in areas where the disease has been present for a long time. If you or your Arborist confirms signs of boxwood blight, a sample can be sent to the Maryland Department of Agriculture Pathology.

Thank You

The staff, Arborists, and crew at Wood Acres thank our loyal customers for your continued confidence in Wood Acres as your tree and shrub care specialists. We all suffered through another difficult year. Our weather patterns continue to be unusual, but your Arborist keeps current on changes to the environment and to your landscape. We will continue to try hard to meet and exceed your needs and expectations.



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