
SHADE TREES TO IMPROVE COMFORT AND HOUSE VALUE

Fall is tree-planting season. Here are some reasons and advice about planting trees for more house value, more shade, and more beauty.

These days, with so much emphasis on energy savings, planting trees is smart for several reasons. Energy-saving trees improve the air you breathe, cut your heating and cooling bills, provide a home to wildlife, and they add beauty and value to your home in the form of curb appeal.



THE FINANCIAL BENEFIT OF ENERGY-SAVING TREES

ENERGY VALUE

The most tangible benefit comes from energy savings. Trees properly placed around your home can reduce your air conditioning needs by 30% and save 20% to 50% in heating costs.

How can trees help with your heating costs?

Blocking cold winds is the biggest contribution trees can make towards energy costs in winter. Winter winds can force cold air into holes or cracks in walls or frequently opened doors.

It is estimated that 53% of a homeowner's energy use goes into heating a home. A well-designed windbreak can reduce heating costs by 10% to 25% or more. Windbreaks work by reducing wind speed and diverting air up and over homes. Breaks should be planted perpendicular to the prevailing winter winds, most likely on the west, northwest and north sides of the home. However local conditions and weather patterns should be reviewed to select the best planting locations.

How do trees help with cooling costs?

Shade is the number one reason to plant a tree to help with cooling costs. A correctly planted shade tree can

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reduce energy costs by US\$250/CA\$312 per year, and make the house generally more comfortable.



Source: MXM for HouseLogic (US Dollars)

AESTHETIC VALUE

According to the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service in Indiana, in the US, a 15¾-foot-wide silver maple in good health could be worth US\$2,562 / CA\$3,200 in house value improvement.

More mature, healthy trees can add an average of US\$8,870 / CA\$11,100 to a home's sale price and decrease its time on the market.

In Canada, the government is campaigning for Canadians to consider making their homes sustainable, which means being able to produce their own food if possible. Planting fruit trees can provide shade and food, both of which increase the aesthetic and practical value of the home.

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Of course, tree value depends on size, species, location, and condition. If you're thinking of adding a tree this fall, see below for some advice.

DO'S & DON'TS OF PLANTING TREES FOR VALUE

DO'S FOR PLANTING TREES

- Plant trees that thrive in your climate. For instance, hot, dry climates will require different trees than wet, cool climates. Where water is in short supply, plant water-resistant trees. Where water is abundant and winters longer, plant deciduous trees. They'll lose their leaves in the winter so the sun can shine through.
- Plant the trees on the south and west sides of a house to provide the most cooling shade.
- If you live in a cold climate, plant evergreens on the north side of your home to block icy winter winds.
- Think about the tree's full-grown size and shape before you dig. Avoid planting trees close to the house, especially if they're widely branching trees.
- The best advice is to talk to a local nursery about the best trees for your situation. Also ask about local diseases or pests that can threaten trees in your yard and community.

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DON'T'S FOR PLANTING TREES

- Don't plant underneath your overhead power lines. Eventually your tree will reach those power lines. Falling trees and branches can cause power outages.
- Don't plant too close to your home's foundation. Roots can damage the foundation or block sewer lines.
- Don't plant haphazardly. Consider all your surroundings, your view, and fire danger before planting. The wrong tree in the wrong place could actually lower your home's appraised value.
- Also, be careful about planting trees during home construction work. Tree failure can happen seven to 10 years after construction, primarily because the root system fails when the soil is compacted

TREE COSTS

Expect to pay US\$50-\$100/CA\$100-\$500 for a 6- to 7-foot deciduous tree, such as a Japanese maple or evergreen. The same tree at 15 feet will cost about double that amount.

Start with the largest trees you can afford. But be cautious. Make sure you understand how to nurse your baby trees.

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BEST SHADE TREES

There is no “best” for shade trees. There’s only a best for your location and desired appearance. For instance, if you live in Ontario, you might like to grow a Black Cherry tree. If you live in Florida, you might grow a Magnolia.



Black Cherry, ideal for Ontario, CA



Southern Magnolia, ideal for Florida, US

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GET MORE INFORMATION

Start your shade tree hunt online by googling “best shade trees, (your location).” Then approach your local nursery and bring a soil sample. A good nursery will be able to tell you how to amend your soil to provide the best growth medium.

WANT MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING YOUR HOME'S VALUE? GIVE ME A CALL!