

“Honey... It’s Hot! We need Shade!!” by Joe Covington

Every year when it gets very hot in the summer (July, August, Sept.), people really begin to shop for shade trees. Is it the optimum time of year to plant? Heck no! But, you can plant at this time of year with complete confidence if you follow a few simple rules.

First of all, don’t buy a tree unless it’s in a container and has been growing in that same container for at least one full season. Why is this? Because “balled and burlapped” trees, those that are dug from the field in the wintertime and their rootballs wrapped in burlap, have had a significant number of roots cut in the process. These B&B trees are placed in sawdust heal-beds at your local nursery waiting to be sold. Once the leaves appear in the spring, the roots start to pop out of the burlap bag they’re wrapped in. When pulled out of the sawdust heal-bed, just the trip from the nursery to your home can be enough to dry-out the roots, consequently “shocking out” the tree.

Container-grown trees don’t go through any of this nightmare. The root ball slips out of the container with virtually no root damage or loss when it’s time to plant. This is where the second rule comes in....once the tree is planted, water it regularly and fertilize monthly with root stimulator. Following these simple rules can put you ahead of schedule compared to waiting until next season to plant.

The one drawback to container-grown trees is the price. Container-grown trees take more time to grow than trees grown in the field since field-grown trees can retain natural ground moisture and nutrients. This means all growers have to charge more for container-grown trees because, hey, time is money.....but my money’s on faster shade!!

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