

Top Ten Tree Tips

By: Rose Koester, CSIF Summer Intern

1

Set goals

Ask yourself, “What do I want to accomplish by planting trees?” Make sure to account for the amount of space needed for snow drop, ventilation and manure-handling equipment. Also, think about future plans for expansion. Don’t forget, the Green Farmstead Partner (GFP) Program is here to help!

4

A good fit

Figure out the type(s) of tree(s) that would best achieve the goals you have. Whether your goal is to provide visual screening, shade, snow control or a windbreak, there are many options available – from fast growing trees, to shade trees, to flowering trees and shrubs – all of your goals can be accomplished when you have the right plan.

6

Plant properly

It is best to plant trees on a cool, cloudy day. As a general rule, trees should be transplanted no deeper than the soil they were originally grown in. Before putting the plant in the ground, get rid of any packaging material that may be around it. Plant the tree upright and make sure the roots are hanging down in a natural position. After the tree is planted, be sure to water it.

9

Fertilize frugally

Although fertilizing usually isn’t needed, you may see more growth if you fertilize your trees. If you do plan to fertilize, it is good to use a well-balanced fertilizer. Consult with a participating GFP nursery to talk about the options.

2

Have a plan

Once you identify your goals, visit with one of the GFP partners or participating nurseries to come up with a plan that will accomplish everything you need it to. The last thing you want to do is rip trees out in 10 years because they have unanticipated, detrimental impacts. Visit www.supportfarmers.com/nurseries for a listing of all the participating nurseries.

7

Do it right

Watering is one of the most important parts of planting a tree. The rule of thumb is 1 inch of water every 7 to 10 days, including rainfall. Most trees do the best in well-drained soils. If your soils are well-drained or overly drained you may want to consider using a drip irrigation system.

3

Right place, right time

Most trees are planted in the spring or fall. Depending on how much room you have to work with, you may be looking at a single or multiple-row planting, and one or more species of trees and/or shrubs. It’s important to know the growth characteristics and spacing requirements for each species – be sure to consult with your GFP nursery professional.

5

Prepare the site

Many times construction of the building can create poor conditions for healthy plant growth. The biggest problem is compaction, which leads to poor drainage and soils that won’t allow roots to properly grow and support the plant. Use a tillage tool to help level the surface and kill any weeds or unwanted grass.

8

Got mulch?

Keeping your trees mulched will help keep the soil moisture levels up and weeds down. It also helps prevent string trimmers and lawn mowers from damaging it. Do not pile the mulch up around the tree trunk as it can cause damage.

10

Keep trees happy and healthy

Windbreak trees do not need to be staked. However, it might be a good idea to stake bare-root or container-grown top heavy trees over 6-feet tall. Leave stakes in place for only a year or two so their roots can grow. Use a flexible 1 to 2 inch banded material to attach the tree to the stake. Do NOT use wire around the trunk! Your tree should be able to move enough so it can gain strength, but not so much that the tree starts to lean.

For more information on the Green Farmstead Partner program, please visit supportfarmers.com/greenfarms or call 800-932-2436.