

How to Plant Trees in the Fall

Expert Instructions on Time to Plant, Selection of Trees and Precautions in Tree Removals

By B. R. Morton, B.Sc.F.,
Dominion Forestry Branch, Ottawa.

The planting of any tree is best done at a time when it is making no growth, either early in the spring before the buds open or in the autumn before the ground freezes. Evergreens, such as the pines or the spruces, can be planted with more or less success during the summer months, but it requires extra precautions to be taken and should be avoided if possible. Broad-leaved species such as maple and elms should never be planted when in leaf, that is, while the leaves are still green and active. It is not necessary to wait until every leaf is shed. Some trees, like the oaks and the beech, frequently retain many of their leaves throughout the greater part of the winter. Spring planting usually gives better results than fall planting. Spring is the season of most vigorous growth, and planting at that time gives the tree an opportunity to establish itself, and the soil a chance to become thoroughly settled before the winter. There is then little danger of the trees being heaved by the frost. However, if proper precautions are taken, there is little risk of serious loss as a result of fall planting.

Selection of Trees.

In buying trees, other things being equal, it is advisable to order them from a local nursery. This reduces the risk of loss during transportation, and enables one to visit the nursery and make the selection personally.

In selecting a tree, a compact root system is of great importance. The more small roots a tree has the greater its chance of surviving the shock of transplanting, and the more rapid will be its growth. A large top is desirable provided there is an abundance of roots. A tree with many branches and few roots will make very slow growth if it survives at all. A tree which has lost many of its feeding roots is unable to meet the demand made by the branches, and it is therefore necessary to remove a proportional number of the branches to restore the balance.

No matter how carefully a tree is dug up many of the roots are sure to be broken off or injured. The larger the tree the greater the loss of roots and more severe the pruning required. The removal of four-fifths of the past season's growth from all branches will be sufficient with trees not more than three or four years of age. The cut should be made just above some strong bud. Care, however, should be taken not to destroy the leader or main stem. All broken roots should be trimmed to enable them to heal. All cuts should be made by a sharp knife and be smooth.

The Single Leader.

It is frequently impossible to trim an evergreen tree without permanently destroying its value for ornamental purposes. Therefore greater pains should be taken to secure