

# How to choose the right tree for your property

Before choosing a tree species to plant on your property, there are some important factors to consider. Use the questions below to help identify what you need to know to choose the right tree for the right place. Make a note of your responses to each question – you can take them to your local nursery to help select the right tree for you.

## 1

### Where can you plant a new tree?

Trees should be planted at least one meter away from utilities, fences and paved surfaces and at least two meters away from buildings. Call BC1Call or visit [www.bc1c.ca](http://www.bc1c.ca) to identify underground utilities such as gas, sewer and water lines.

## 2

### How large a tree can you plant on your property?

Identify the maximum size of tree you could fit on your property.

The size of the tree you can plant is limited by the soil volume available for roots to grow, and the air space for the branches to grow. To help to visualize this, the diagram to the right shows zones around a house where tree size is limited:



- **Small tree zone:** only a small tree (less than 10 m tall and less than 8 m wide) should be planted because of the proximity to buildings. Examples of small trees include Japanese maple, eastern redbud or Korean dogwoods. Small trees should also be considered when there are overhead powerlines or small amounts of soil.
- **Medium tree zone:** a tree 10 to 15 m tall and less than 12 m wide can be considered where there is more space above and below ground but there are still limits due to nearby buildings, utilities or limited soil. Examples of medium trees include field maple, Katsura or Honey Locust.
- **Large tree zone:** where space is abundant a large tree (more than 15 m tall and more than 12 m wide) can be considered. Examples of large trees include Garry oak, Douglas fir or red maple.

# 3

## What qualities you are looking for in a tree?

There are many benefits you could prioritize to help choose the right tree for you. It's important to choose a tree size and species that provides the characteristics you are looking for. For example:



### Shade

A larger, deciduous tree would provide shade in the summer while letting sun shine through in the winter.



### Windbreak

A large evergreen tree can block the wind to reduce wind chill and save heating energy for buildings.



### Food

A fruit or nut-bearing tree species can provide food in the summer and fall.



### Flowers or seasonal colours

An ornamental tree species can liven up your yard with bright colours and fragrant smells.



### Privacy

Evergreen trees can provide a screen for more privacy on your property.



### Biodiversity

Native trees and flowering trees can provide habitat for native animals and pollinators.



### Allergens

If you are concerned about allergies, check out resources in the Pollinator and Allergy-Aware Gardening guide.

# 4

## What other factors could limit the species that you can choose from?

The City of Victoria is located in Canada plant hardiness zones 8 to 9. Plant hardiness zones are often identified on trees in local retail nurseries. Choose a tree species that is hardy to Victoria.

Consider any site factors that might constrain what type of tree species you can choose.

For example:

Is the soil on your site sandy or clayey, typically dry or often wet and saturated with water?

Do the plants growing nearby show signs of drought stress in the summer?

Is there a small volume of soil or shallow soil depth due to bedrock?

Are there overhead utilities above the planting site?

Is the planting location in full sun, partial shade or shade?

How much maintenance are you able to provide for your tree?

Do you need to make sure your tree doesn't over shade your garden?



### Victoria.ca/urbanforest

- Take the pledge and commit to planting trees in 2020
- Plant and record the trees you plant with the City's tree tracker
- Learn more about tree health
- Find out about workshops, tours, and events taking place throughout 2020