

RESOURCE

Protect - Conserve - Preserve



With the end of summer in sight, many homeowners might want to take breather from yard work. But, if you've been thinking about adding trees or shrubs to your landscape, you should think of fall as your friend. Here's why.

"The fall is the best time to plant trees and shrubs in South Texas," said Calvin Finch, one of San Antonio's foremost experts on Horticulture and Water Conservation. "The plants have time to develop roots in the cool soil before they face the stress of a hot, dry summer. The process of selecting and planting a tree or shrub is not overly complicated, but it deserves some thought. If you select well and care for the plant adequately, it could be providing benefits, which includes saving water, for a long time."

Here are a few tips to keep in mind if you're planning to enhance your landscape in the near future.

- Determine where you want a tree or shrub and what you want to accomplish with it. Shade is one reason to add permanent plants, but you will not accomplish your goal if you plant the shade tree on the North side of the house.
- Determine what size tree or shrub you want to fill the available space. Select the species and variety based on mature size not the size that the plant is in the nursery.
- Despite our belief that plants grow slowly, most grow quickly and can outgrow their spot in the landscape unless you have selected well.
- Allow plenty of space between shade trees and buildings or other infrastructure. Allow at least 10 feet space for a small tree and 20 or 30 feet for a large shade tree. Keep sidewalks and driveways clear.
- Purchase a reasonable size tree or shrub. Small plants are less expensive and easier to plant. Sometimes they even reach mature size before larger more expensive specimens because they become established more easily.
- Select the right plant for the amount of light that is available. It takes a shade-tolerant plant such as viburnum to produce a nice plant in deep shade. *Continued on the next page.*

Fall is a great time to plant new trees or shrubs - continued

- Dig the hole as deep as the container and two or three times as wide. The top of the root ball should be even with or higher than the surrounding soil. It is generally better to refill the planting hole with the native soil or compost. The plant will have to grow in the native soil if it is to survive, and it is less likely that the hole will form a well that holds water if the soil is consistent with the adjacent soil.
- Firm the soil around the root ball by soaking the area with a slow running hose. The water will help to eliminate air pockets.

"Plant roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees or higher, which may occur all winter in Texas," Finch noted. "During the winter months, the root systems of the fall-planted specimens will develop and establish themselves. When spring arrives, this expanded root system can support and take advantage of the full surge of spring growth. So people might want to do a little research in September as to what kinds of trees or shrubs will work best in their landscape and then plan to get them in the ground in October. Nurseries also have great sales at this time of year, so now is really the best time to think about the future of your landscape." 💧

Landscape Design School Set for September 8



**WATERSAVER
LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL**

Saturday, September 8
303 Pearl Parkway, Suite 114
(The San Antonio Area Foundation's Wells Center at The Pearl)

8:30 am - 1:30 pm
\$30 Individual - \$50 Two members of household

  

Info@GardeningVolunteers.org - Sign up at: www.GardeningVolunteers.org/design-school

Fall is the best time to plant in South Texas. It gives plants several months to get established before the hot weather returns. That makes these fall classes the perfect time to plan a project in your landscape. The landscape design school is informal and interactive. You'll get a packet of three full-color plant guides and many other helpful handouts.

Then you'll hear experts talk about how to:

- use drought-tolerant plants in your yard,
- be your own landscape designer,
- amend your soil and use mulches,
- plant the right plant in the right place.

At the end of the presentations, you'll get a chance to meet one-on-one for 20 minutes with an experienced gardener about your own project. To register, go to www.gardeningvolunteers.org/designschool. 💧

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tips**

Did you know...

September 4 is National Protect Your Groundwater Day. The Trinity Glen Rose Aquifer is just one of many sources for groundwater found in the United States. For example, 44 percent of Americans rely on groundwater for their drinking water. Groundwater is 20 to 30 times larger than all the U.S. lakes, streams and rivers combined.