



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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TIME IS RIGHT TO REPLANT AFTER DROUGHT, DELUGE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - "Fall is always the best time of year to plant trees, shrubs and other perennials," says Rob Beets, horticultural marketing specialist with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, "and this fall may be better than usual."

"By now you have a pretty good idea which trees are going to make it, and which ones have succumbed to the drought of '07. You're probably pretty sure, too, that there's been enough rain this summer to soften the ground and restore the local water table, so it's time to remove and replace the dead or dying trees around your home."

"Fall planting, especially where trees and shrubs are concerned, serves several purposes," says Beets. "First, it gives plants a chance to get roots established in a new site. It's an adjustment they won't have to make in the spring and hot, dry summer, when their energies are better spent growing, blooming and resisting insect pests and diseases. Fall planting gives these plants a head start, which leads to another benefit: they're much more likely to bloom the first year if planted in autumn instead of spring."

"Plantings of perennials succeed well from October right up until the ground freezes, which in Tennessee could easily be December," says Beets. Perennial plants include any plant that goes dormant instead of dying in cold weather, from oak trees to Black-eyed Susans.

So which perennials are best?

"A thorough checklist of personal preferences and environmental restrictions can answer that question for you," says the specialist. "Find out how much space a particular plant will eventually claim, and how much sun it needs. Will it drop some unwanted seed or fruit? Will the roots tangle into underground pipes or cause mowing problems if they snake along above ground? Will it grow well in this region?" The answers will lead buyers to the right options and, Beets hopes, to a local grower to find the healthiest specimens possible.

"Locally grown plants ensure that purchases have the best chance of surviving in Tennessee, since they are already accustomed to Tennessee's climate. They also aren't

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stressed by being transported for long distances,” says Beets. “Choosing plants not appropriate to Tennessee can be an expensive mistake.”

Landscaping around a home is an investment which affects the energy efficiency of the home, and the value of the property. Well-placed and well-chosen trees keep homes cooler in summer and warmer in winter, provide wind breaks and sun shade, food and shelter for wildlife and aesthetic benefits for home and community.

No matter which trees are chosen for fall planting, says Beets, some basic guidelines apply. Watering is important, should the weather turn dry. Mulch will help trees retain moisture. Go ahead and fertilize with a root stimulator when planting, especially in the fall, because roots can still develop and grow during the winter even as the rest of the tree rests.

“Be sure to ask the grower for the latest planting information,” says Beets. “Root balls are made so much broader now that a shallower hole is recommended than in the past. The top of the root ball should be the top of the ground, so be careful not to plant too deep. Also, research shows that staking trees is a detrimental practice. Tree trunks actually become stronger when the trees are allowed to sway and resist winds. If necessary, use stakes through the root ball to help pin the tree in position.”

For a list of local plant growers or more information on fall plants, visit www.picktnproducts.org and click on Nursery Products or contact TDA market development at 615-837-5160.

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