

When Planting Trees, Consider Powerlines

Planting trees is an enjoyable activity for every active homeowner or gardening enthusiast. However, when deciding what type of tree you'll plant, please remember to look up to see where the tree will be located in relation to overhead utility lines.

The ultimate mature height of the tree to be planted must be within the available overhead growing space. Just as important, the soil area must be large enough to accommodate the particular rooting habits and ultimate trunk diameter of the tree. Proper tree and site selection will provide trouble-free beauty and pleasure for years to come. Checking the location of electric, phone or cable lines is an important part of this process.

Planting tall growing trees under and near these lines will ultimately require your utility to prune them to maintain safe clearance from the wires. This pruning may result in the tree having an unnatural appearance. Periodic pruning can also lead to a shortened life span for the tree. Trees that must be pruned away from power lines are under greater stress and are more susceptible to insects and disease. Proper selection and placement of trees in and around overhead utilities can eliminate potential outages, public safety hazards, reduce expenses for utilities and their rate payers, and improve the appearance of landscapes.

Don't Forget Underground Lines

Tree roots and underground lines often co-exist without problems. However, trees planted near underground lines could have their roots damaged if the lines need to be dug up for repairs. The biggest danger to underground lines occurs during planting.

Before you plant, make sure you're aware of the location of any underground utilities. Never assume that these utility lines are buried deeper than you plan to dig, because in some cases, utility lines are very close to the surface. To be certain you don't accidentally dig into any lines and risk serious injury or a costly service interruption, call the Oregon Utility Notification Center 48 hours before you dig. The number is 1-800-332-2344.

Which Trees Should I Plant?

Several kinds of Maples, Dogwoods, and Hawthorns grow to 30 feet or less, and are appropriate trees to plant to avoid conflicts with powerlines.

The following is just a partial list of suggestions:

Acer buergerianum
Acer ginnala
Acer griseum
Acer palmatum (numerous cultivars)
Acer platanoides 'Globosum'

Trident Maple
Amur Maple
Paperbark Maple
Japanese Maple

Cornus alternifolia
Cornus controversa
Cornus florida 'Cherokee Chief'
Cornus florida 'Cherokee Princess'
Cornus florida var. rubra
Cornus kousa 'Milky Way'
Cornus kousa "Satomi"

Pagoda Dogwood
Giant Dogwood
Flowering Dogwood (red)
Flowering Dogwood (white)
Flowering Dogwood (pink)
Kousa Dogwood (white)
Kousa Dogwood (pink)

Crataegus laevigata 'Crimson Cloud'
Crataegus x lavalleyi
Crataegus phaenopyrum
Crataegus viridis 'Winter King'

Magnolia denudata
Magnolia grandiflora 'Edith Bouge'
Magnolia grandiflora 'Victoria'
Magnolia x loebneri 'Leonard Messel'
Magnolia x loebneri 'Merrill'
Magnolia x soulangiana
Magnolia stellata

English Hawthorn
Lavalle Hawthorn
Washington Hawthorn
Green Hawthorn

Yulan Magnolia
Southern Magnolia

Loebner Magnolia
'Merrill' Magnolia
Saucer Magnolia
Star Magnolia