



## PLANT SMART.

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU PLAN BEFORE YOU PLANT, AND CHOOSE THE RIGHT TREE FOR THE RIGHT PLACE.



Winter winds

Evergreens block cold winds

Deciduous trees help block summer sun

Summer winds

# PLANT FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

Shade trees can reduce home heating and cooling costs by up to 20 percent. They shade windows, reducing heat gain.

Tall deciduous trees provide cooling shade in summer, yet allow sunlight to warm a home in winter when they lose

their leaves. Evergreen trees planted on the windward side of a home help block cold wind and reduce winter heating requirements. Use small trees, shrubs and vines to provide shade for walls and windows, if there is not enough space for a large tree.

## WHY WE INCLUDE TREES IN OUR SURROUNDINGS

**Aesthetics.** Trees add beauty through foliage, flowers and form.

**Control air flow.** By removing lower branches, you can direct the breeze across patios and lawn areas.

Evergreen trees can block strong winter winds.

**Noise abatement.** Dense foliage absorbs sound and acts as a visual obstruction that blocks unattractive views.

**Habitat for wildlife.** Trees provide nesting sites, food and safety for birds and other animals.



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GROW

Planting the right tree in the right place can enhance your property value and prevent costly pruning and damage to your home in the future.

If poorly located, however, trees can be a constant threat, resulting in power outages or safety concerns. To avoid problems later, talk to a landscape professional and ask plenty of questions before you plan your landscaping. To keep your trees the way nature intended, know before you grow.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A LANDSCAPE PLAN

Your landscape plan, drawn to scale by you or by a professional, serves as the map to your planting journey. All it takes to draw a good landscape plan is a knowledge of plants and a feeling for what looks good together to plan a landscape that is beautiful, without encumbering power lines.

Choose just the right spot for each of your shade trees. Plant them so they'll provide shade from the hot summer sun. Give them sufficient root room to avoid damage to the foundation, patio, walks, curb or drive. Allow ample space for each tree to mature without encumbering its neighbors, and be sure to keep them well away from power lines.



### TREE PLACEMENT TIPS:



Try not to align shade trees with anything else – not with the corners of the house, the end of the fence or the shade trees next door.



Avoid planting trees directly in the center of any portion of the yard.



Eliminate parkways (areas between the sidewalk and the curb) as a choice, as they do not allow enough room for normal tree growth.



Stay away from water and sewer lines and underground cables, so your trees won't have to be uprooted should repairs be needed years later.



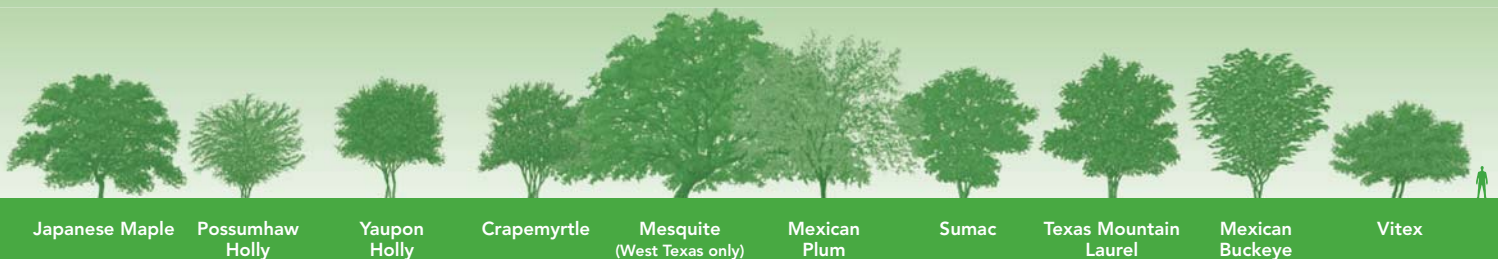
Never plant close to, or under a power line.



# PLAN BEFORE YOU PLANT WITH THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Trees come in all shapes and sizes, from more normal rounded and oval forms to columnar, vase-shaped and weeping. But, only certain types of trees should be used in your home's landscape plan due to expected growth patterns. Their mature height is a critical consideration, and should be discussed with a landscape professional before planting.

The following trees, all under 25 feet at their mature height, are excellent choices for your landscape plan when planted away from power lines. In many cases, they are large shrubs that have been pruned into tree forms. Smaller accent trees like these can serve to highlight doorways or corners of houses, and help conserve your home's energy by providing shade.



Japanese Maple

Possumhaw  
Holly

Yaupon  
Holly

Crapemyrtle

Mesquite  
(West Texas only)

Mexican  
Plum

Sumac

Texas Mountain  
Laurel

Mexican  
Buckeye

Vitex



## CHOOSING AND PLANTING TREES

**Choose adapted species.** As mentioned, fast growth is not a good criterion for choosing trees. Opt instead, for appearance, pest resistance and adaptability to soils and climate.

**Look for healthy, vigorous specimens.** Once you've decided which type of tree you want to plant, visit several tree nurseries to find the best possible specimens. Choose trees that are vigorous and free of major trunk damage.

**Plant new trees properly.** Dig a shallow, broad planting hole. The hole can be up to three times the diameter of the root ball, but the depth should not exceed the size of the ball. It is important to keep the hole within these specified sizes because the roots on the tree must push through surrounding soil to establish and grow. On most planting sites in new developments, existing soils have been compacted and are unsuitable for healthy root growth. Breaking up the soil in a large area around the tree provides the newly emerging roots room to expand into loose soil to hasten establishment.

### SEEDLING TREES IN THE LANDSCAPE

Trees that come up as "volunteers," planted by birds along fencerows and beneath power lines, seldom are in desirable locations from a landscaping perspective. They grow into the power lines and are likely to break during wind and ice storms. It's best to remove them when they're young saplings, before they're able to crowd desirable trees or do harm to the utilities.

## PRUNE WITH A PURPOSE

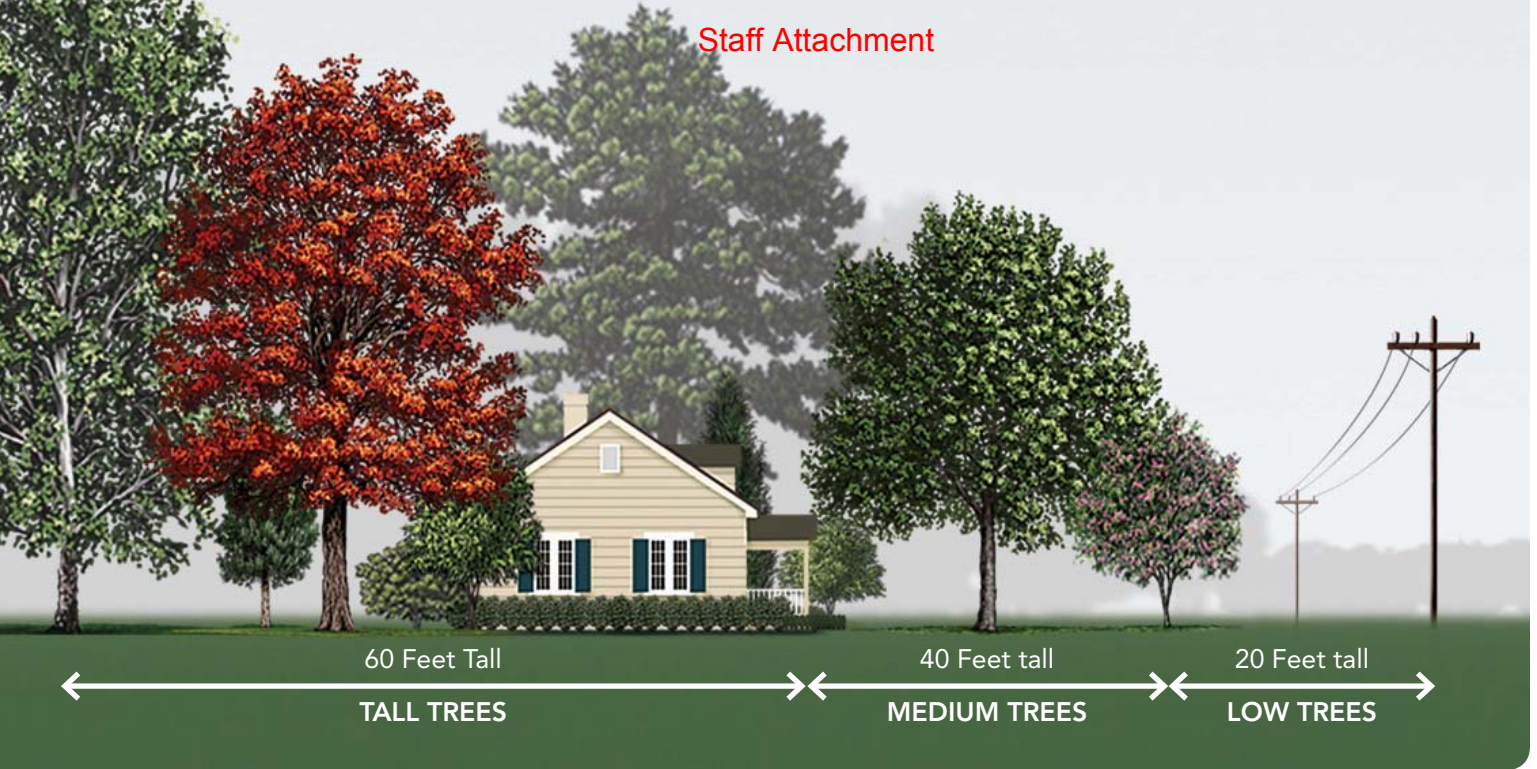
Pruning helps keep your home landscape safe by cutting back damaged or dead branches. While you can maintain small shrubs and plants that are far away from power lines, you must leave pruning trees near power lines to a professional. Tree trimming near energized power lines should be done by Oncor, when necessary to remove branches and limbs that could interfere with those power lines.

When pruning do not leave stubs. They won't heal properly, and decay will probably develop in both the stub and trunk. Take care when removing large branches so their weight does not cause stripping of the bark into the main trunk.

## CARE FOR TREES REGULARLY

Water and proper nutrition are the keys to getting a tree to grow well and stay healthy. After they've been planted for a couple of years, your trees will succeed from the watering and feeding that you give your turfgrass. High-nitrogen or all-nitrogen lawn foods will serve trees perfectly, but beware when using "weed-and-feed" fertilizers. Some types can harm or kill trees. Fertilize in early spring, early summer and early fall.





## PLANTING GUIDELINES: THE DISTRIBUTION PLANTING ZONE CONCEPT

The distance trees should be planted from overhead power distribution lines is determined by the tree's height at maturity. Trees planted near transmission lines require greater clearance distance.

### LAWN

This zone is suitable for those trees that grow over 60 feet. When planting, you should consider your neighbor's view and property. Trees for this zone should be placed at least 35 feet away from the house for proper root development and should never be planted near a power line.

### HOUSE LAWN

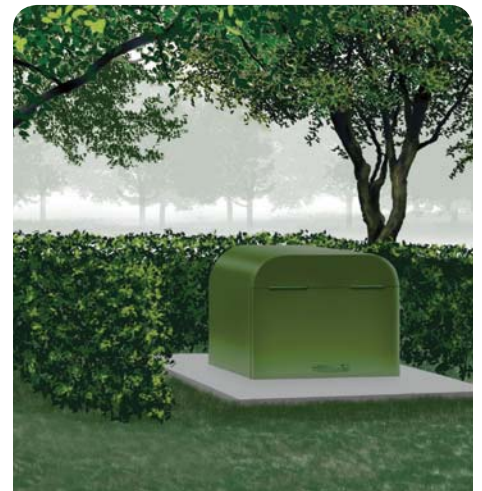
This zone, which includes mostly lawn area, is the main landscape area. Trees in this area should frame the landscape without hiding the house from sight. Trees for this zone may have a mature height of 40 feet. Also, consider the diameter of the tree at maturity.

### POWER LINE

This zone ends 20 feet away from overhead power lines. We suggest you not plant any tree in this zone, but if you must, select a suitable tree from this guide. These selections include those trees that should require minimal pruning to assure public safety and reliable electric service.

### RESTRICTED AREA

Avoid planting trees or shrubs around electric transformers. Allow at least 10-feet access in front of transformer and five feet around sides and back as shown.







## TRANSMISSION RIGHTS OF WAY

Transmission Rights of Way (ROW) facilities have different clearance requirements than distribution facilities. Maintaining vegetation on transmission facilities should be designed to establish grass or pasture land with no trees or shrubs on the ROW. This allows for utility personnel to access their facilities, to be able to work on them and repair or restore service to the line. This also helps eliminate the possibility of tree-related interference or outage. The distance of clearance required is determined by the voltage of the power line and the ROW easement document pertaining to a specific property. Unlike distribution facilities that carry electricity to your neighborhood, transmission facilities carry enough electricity to serve large geographic areas and transport electricity to other regions of the state. The effect of an outage on a transmission line would be widespread and have greater impact due to the number of customers involved. When planting taller trees, take into consideration the mature height of the trees. A tree that will grow to 60 feet should be planted at least 60 feet from the outside edge of the transmission ROW.

Oncor works very closely with environmental and regulatory agencies and landowners to develop and maintain existing habitats correctly, so as not to interfere with the transmission of electricity through our lines. The maintenance program of each transmission ROW is developed to provide reliable electricity to our customers and the surrounding areas.

**“By properly maintaining the ROW, we are able to create viable ecosystems that promote the development of wildlife and bird habitats.”**



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GROW

Oncor's award-winning vegetation management experts, including certified arborists and line-qualified tree service providers, work diligently so our customers receive the safe and reliable service they expect. This brochure was developed in collaboration with horticulturist Neil Sperry to better assist Texans in planning before they plant.

Neil Sperry's name has been synonymous with Texas gardening since 1970. Inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2003, Sperry has been broadcasting gardening and horticulture tips for 40 years. In addition, *Neil Sperry's Complete Guide to Texas Gardening*, *Neil Sperry's GARDENS Magazine* and his annual Texas gardening calendar continue to help Texans plan and plant beautiful landscapes.



NEIL SPERRY HORTICULTURIST

### QUICK FACTS

- A major cause of power outages is from trees contacting power lines.
- Trees provide shade and shelter, reducing yearly heating and cooling costs by \$2.1 billion.
- Trees located along streets act as a glare and reflection control.
- Trees are the longest living organisms on earth.
- Trees reduce noise pollution by acting as sound barriers.

For more information visit [oncor.com](http://oncor.com) or [askoncor.com](http://askoncor.com)



Oncor has been recognized as a  
Tree Line USA Utility since 2001

