

## Things to Remember

1. Call Iowa One Call before you dig (1-800-292-8989 or 811).  
Yes, it is the law.
2. Trees growing in and around power lines are a safety hazard!
  - Call a professional for help trimming trees near power lines.
  - MPW has an Interest Free Loan Program for Residential Customers wanting to move their overhead electrical service to underground. This may improve service reliability and safety, prevent expensive tree removal, and increase your home's property value. Call (563) 262-2631 for more details.
3. Trees can add significant value to your home or business. However, improperly placed trees that need to be removed can be expensive and decrease the value of your home or business.
4. Properly placed trees can save you money by reducing your heating and cooling bills.

# Tree Placement

A GUIDE TO PLANTING  
FOR MAXIMUM BENEFIT  
AND SAFETY



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Environmental Stewardship is one of MPW's Core Values, so naturally, we're a big proponent of trees which not only beautify a landscape, but also improve air quality. However, one of the hidden benefits of a well-placed tree is the energy savings they can provide.

When properly positioned, a shade tree reduces demand on air conditioning, and mature evergreen trees are a great windbreak in the heating season. It's beneficial to consider the right kind of trees to buy and where to plant them for maximum effect.

Beyond energy savings, it's also important to remember how trees, their branches and root systems interact with overhead and underground infrastructure as well as neighboring properties and structures.

## Steps to Take

1. Call Iowa One Call before deciding where your trees should go.
  - It's the Law to call before you dig.
  - Underground services may influence where you want your trees to go.
2. Always consider the mature size of the tree and plan accordingly.
  - Overcrowding trees may have short-term benefits, but it is not good for the long-term health of your trees.
3. Identify areas of the yard where you need to accomplish a certain goal.
  - Determine the direction from which problem sunlight or wind is coming from.
  - Identify areas that you want to shade or block wind.

- i. Blocking your house from north-west winds can reduce heating bills.
  - ii. Blocking your house from the summer sun can lower A/C bills and prevent sun fading to your siding. Large shade trees placed on the southeast and southwest sides of your house will achieve this goal.
- Identify areas of the yard where you need more color or softened views.
  - Decide on areas where you would like there to be a particular feature, such as a view out of the bedroom window, a view from the patio, or a view from the house.

## Trees to Consider

### • Large Shade Trees

Large shade trees are usually placed in open areas of yards and parkways. They should not be close to buildings or power lines, and you should consider where you want shade or wind relief on your property. Try to stay 15-20 ft away from buildings if possible.

### • Evergreens

Evergreens and clump trees are usually placed along the property lines and in windbreaks. These trees get tall and fill out thickly from the top to the bottom of the tree. Most clump trees, like River Birch and Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry, can also be used as ornamental trees. Oftentimes they will be placed around a patio or in the front or back landscape. Do not put evergreen trees up close to houses, garages, near sidewalks or driveways as they tend to grow very large.

## • Ornamental Trees

Ornamental trees, such as Pear, Crabapples, and Hawthorns, can be used anywhere in your yard you want beauty and color. Most often these trees are used close to the home to frame the house or anchor flower beds. Oftentimes, they are used along property lines for screening.

## Guidelines

1. Always check with local officials regarding codes and ordinances.
2. Do not place trees under utility lines that will grow taller than the height of the line.
3. As a general rule, divide the mature spread of the tree in half and try and keep it that far away from structures or adjacent trees of a similar size.
4. Be sure to place trees at least 12-20' from your house depending on the size of the trees.
5. Place trees at least 3-4' away from sidewalks, patios, etc.
6. Place trees about 10-30' apart from each other (depending on the size of the trees).
7. Do not put trees in easements.
8. Do not plant trees in straight lines unless they are in the parkway or part of a windbreak. Natural spacing is preferable.
9. Mulch is much better than rocks around trees.
10. Think about views from inside your house and place trees accordingly.
11. Use a diverse assortment of trees in your yard.
12. Keep in mind how fast the tree will grow and plan accordingly.