



Did You Know....

... that besides avoiding putting in new nursery trees in the middle of summer, the **very best** time to plant a new tree here in the mid-south is not in the springtime, as many believe, but in the mid-to-late fall, after the heat of Indian Summer days is over (thin-barked trees like Japanese maples and dogwoods may be an exception.) Because our winters are not particularly severe, the soil temperature usually stays above the critical point (40 degrees F.) that curtails root growth. This in turn means that the new transplant get four to five months to acclimatize in its new environment and begin new root expansion before sugar energy is needed for spring foliation and bud extension in the following growing season. Also, new trees may need supplemental water in the winter as well; the key factor is not temperature, but rainfall.

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... that when you plant a new tree in clay soil, the best shape for a planting hole is like a shallow extra-wide saucer, **not** a round pit with near-vertical sides. If the plant is a container plant or ball-and-burlap, be sure that about one-third to one-quarter of the root ball is planted **above** the original grade in clay soil. And don't worry too much about putting a lot of extra stuff in the planting hole. If you chop up the bottom of your "saucer" as well as the dirt from the hole, then return it around the transplant with about two inches of good mulch on top, that will serve you better since it minimizes the soil interface issue. More about this next time.

Oak Gall and Fungicidal Applications

Reminder # 1 (a repeat): Gouty oak gall, the "big knots" on the twigs of large oak trees both debilitates and disfigures these important trees. We can now effectively break this cycle with a soil drench insecticide applied in January. Put this on your list to call us to get on our treatment schedule. The product stays in the tissue of your tree and is effective for a full year. (see our newsletter of Winter '06 for more details).

Reminder #2 : Fungal spots and leaf damage on ornamentals and shrubbery is largely caused by the presence of particular inoculum combined with weather conditions in the early spring. A series of three fungicidal applications of annually alternating fungicides, combined with appropriate doses of an active insecticide, can dramatically improve (or prevent) this unsightly and damaging problem. Call our office (756-9893) for an on-site assessment.

