

Selecting the Right Tree for the Right Place

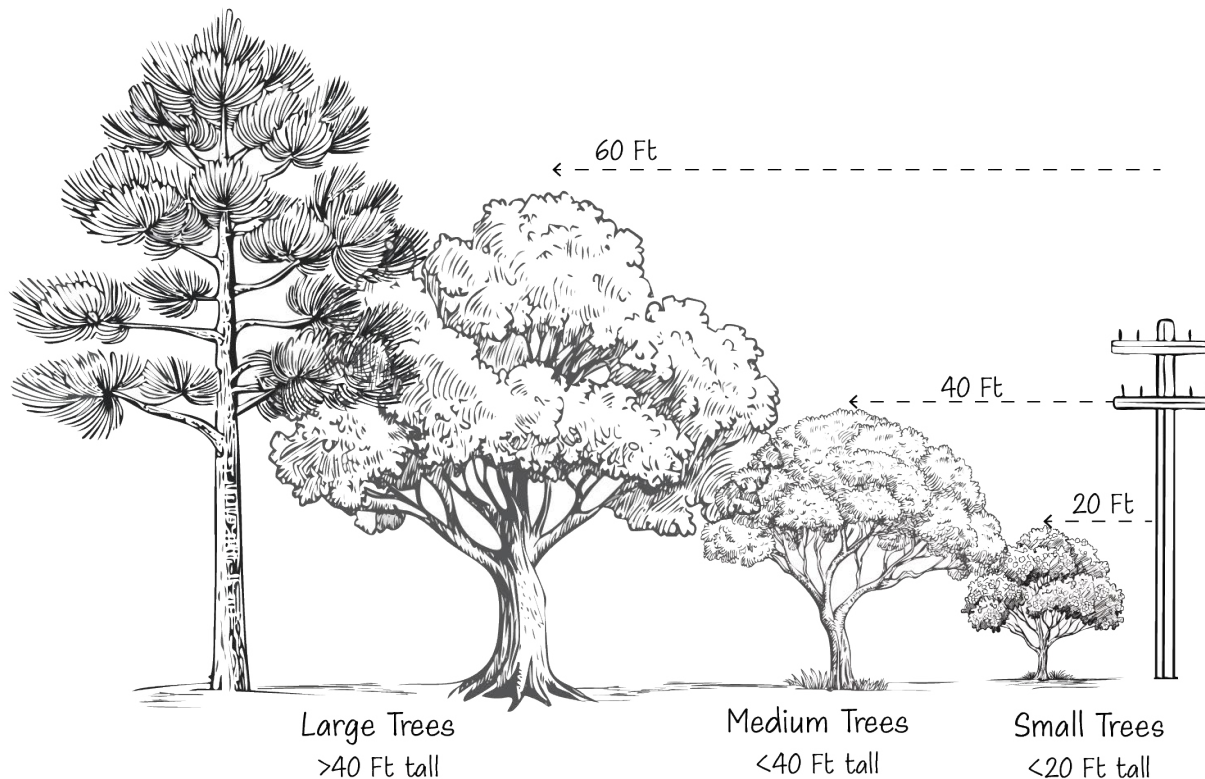
So you want to plant a tree?



Choosing the Right Spot

Make sure to give your tree plenty of room to grow. Choose the location first to correctly match the mature tree size and characteristics with the space you have available. This is the true meaning of the right tree in the right place!

- ▶ **Call 811** to locate any underground utilities **before picking your planting site**. 811 is a useful service to help you determine where underground utilities are located and will help you choose a planting site that doesn't conflict with these utilities.



- ▶ Best practice in New Mexico is to plant your tree a minimum of 10 feet from underground utilities like cable, gas, water or sewer lines. **If overhead utilities are present near your planting site, select a tree that is less than 20 ft tall at maturity**, or place the tree away from the lines by a distance of at least its mature height.
- ▶ **Make sure there will be no conflicts** with nearby buildings, street signs, outdoor lighting or other infrastructure as the tree grows to its full mature size.
- ▶ **Consider how you'll use the space**, avoid blocking your favorite views, and maintain access along frequent walking paths, sidewalks and driveways.
- ▶ **Make a plan for how you will water your tree**. If you don't have automatic irrigation, make sure you have access to a hose for hand watering, or build the [BernCo Tree Efficient Watering System](#) with this simple kit.

Choosing the Right Species

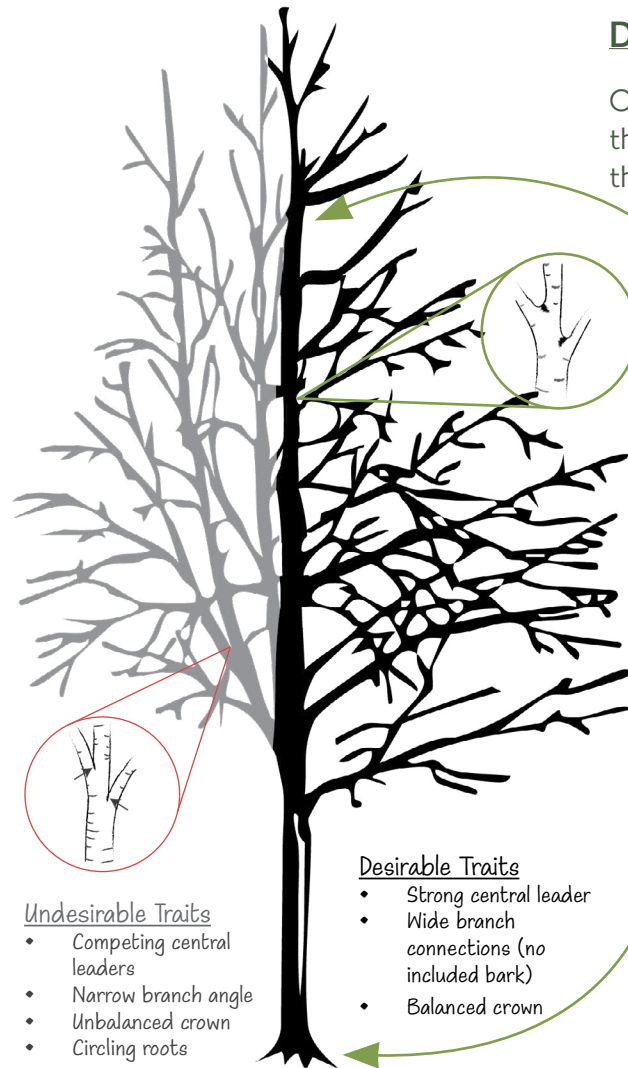
Think about the conditions of your space and the future climate of your area.

Select potential tree species from the [Climate Ready Trees List](#), prepared by regional experts, that recommends tree species for temperature hardiness, drought tolerance, and disease/pest susceptibility. **Be sure to use the list specific to your area!**

Narrow down the possibilities by looking for a tree that has growth characteristics that **match all aspects of the site you have selected**. Is the tree expected to do well at maturity in your site's available space, soil type and volume, drainage conditions, and sun and wind exposure?

Consider how you'll use the space, the maintenance needs of the tree and if the tree species is compatible with these limitations. For example, don't plant a large tree that shades your veggie garden, blocks your favorite view from inside your house, or requires more maintenance than you're prepared to do.

Once these conditions are met, you can consider other characteristics like leaf and flower color/timing, fruit production, or wildlife and pollinator attractiveness.



Undesirable Traits

- Competing central leaders
- Narrow branch angle
- Unbalanced crown
- Circling roots

Desirable Traits

- Strong central leader
- Wide branch connections (no included bark)
- Balanced crown

PRO TIP: Handle your tree by the container. Minimize picking the tree up by the trunk. If you have to pick up the tree by the trunk, lift from the lowest spot possible near the root flare.

Don't Buy Problems at the Nursery!

Once you have assessed your planting space and the right kind of tree for it, it's time to head to the tree nursery.

Look for a tree with a **strong central trunk** and well distributed branches. Larger **branches should not have pinched (included) bark** at connection points, which can lead to branch weakness later in life.

Look for a healthy tree that has little to **no damaged or broken branches** or trunk wounds. The tree should have typical leaf color and appearance for the time of year.

Steer clear of a tree that is **too big for the container (indicating its been in the container for too long)**. Trees that are top heavy with poor root structure grow slower in the long run. It's better to invest in roots at this age than branches and leaves.

Inspect the root flare. Roots should be growing away from the trunk. If you can, pull the tree out of its container and look for circling roots. A quality tree's root ball will remain intact when lifted out of the container. If the tree has excessive circling roots visible, pick a different one. **Over time, circling roots can kill a tree, so choose wisely!**



LET'S PLANT
ALBUQUERQUE
Trees are a gift from one generation to the next.

