

Willow Oak *Quercus phellos*

Willow oak grows best in moist sites as it is a bottomland (river basin) tree. It is not native to NW Arkansas but it is found all around this area. See range map. The willow oak looks different from other oaks because of its leaves. Instead of having wide leaves with lobes, willow oak has many slender leaves like a willow. The leaves make great landscape mulch and require minimal maintenance in the fall. Good crops of acorns are provided annually beginning when the tree is about 20 years old making it a favorite food source for squirrels, deer and many kinds of birds.

Height: 40 to 60 ft. at maturity. Can grow to 100 ft. in ideal situations.

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): 24-48 in. average.

Crown Shape/Spread: This species has a pyramidal form with dense foliage and a canopy spread that can reach 30-40 ft.

Leaf: Leaves are alternate, simple, narrowly elliptical ranging from 2-5-1/2 in. long and 1/3-1 in. wide. Fall foliage is yellow, bronze-orange, yellow-brown and russet-red.

Flowers: Flowering occurs in April or May just after leaf out. The flowers are brown and inconspicuous and not a showy variety.

Fruit: Acorns are 1/2 in. or less in length and width with a round shape.

Landscape Requirements: Right Tree – Right Place

Distance from Utility Line: 60+ ft minimum

pH: 4.5-6.5

Moisture: Moisture must be readily available in the soil during the growing season for best growth.

Sun Light: Prefers full sun.

Landscape Usage: A favored shade tree, it is widely planted as an ornamental. Willow oaks make splendid street trees where overhead space is not limiting and are also excellent for large open areas. This tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common.



Range Map

TREE PLANTING GUIDELINES

1) Plan ahead: Think Right Tree - Right Place. Choose a quality grown species of tree that fits your yard. Look for utilities above and below ground. To reduce summer air conditioning costs or to just help cool your home, plant large deciduous shade trees on the east, south or west sides of your home. Plant conifers (evergreens) on the north side or on the side with prevailing winter winds.

2) Before digging call Arkansas One Call



1 (800) 482-8998 or simply 811

3) Gather your tools: gloves, rounded shovel, pick axe for rocky sites, water hose or bucket, hammer to drive stake(s), heavy duty scissors to cut containers if needed, or to cut burlap, wire cutters to cut wire baskets.

4) Gather your supplies: stake(s), arbor tie or wire tie, B12 root simulator or mycorrhizal fungi (not needed but can be beneficial) and organic mulch (due to cypress tree devastation, cypress mulch is not recommended).

5) Dig the planting hole no deeper than the height of the root ball and 2 to 3 times wider than the root ball. You should have a shallow, wide planting hole. Very Important – the tree should never be planted deeper than the depth of the root ball. This is the worst mistake made in planting trees. It is best if the tree is actually planted high by 1 to 1-½ inches. This insures that after the tree settles it will still be planted at the proper depth.

6) For containerized plants remove the tree from the container; be gentle on the trunk. If it won't come out push in the sides of the container – a little bit. This may free the soil up enough to slip the root ball out. If that doesn't work, cut the container. If tree is ball & burlap, set tree in hole, cut away the wire basket and remove. Cut and remove all twine or other wrapping and top 1/3 of burlap.

7) Backfill the planting hole with the soil you removed when digging the hole. Do not add any other soil amendments or special soil mixes, they are not needed and in fact can cause future rooting problems.

8) When the hole is half full of soil, water to help remove air pockets, then continue to fill the hole until it is full and water again.

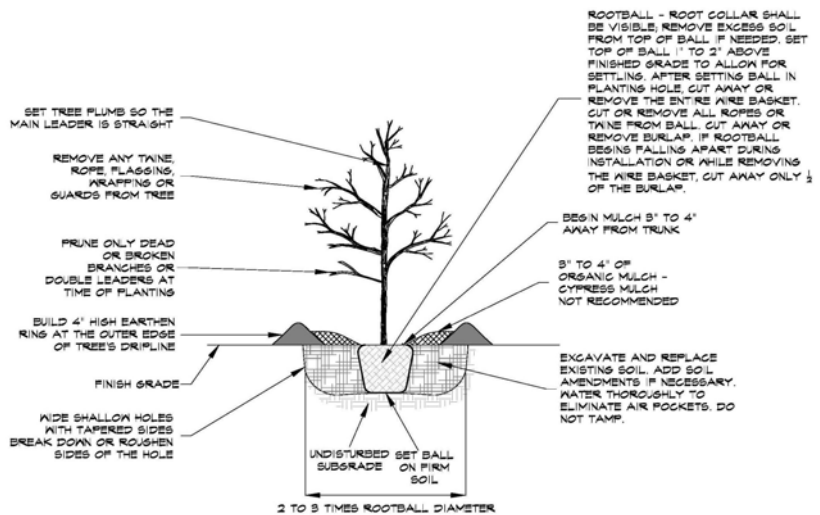
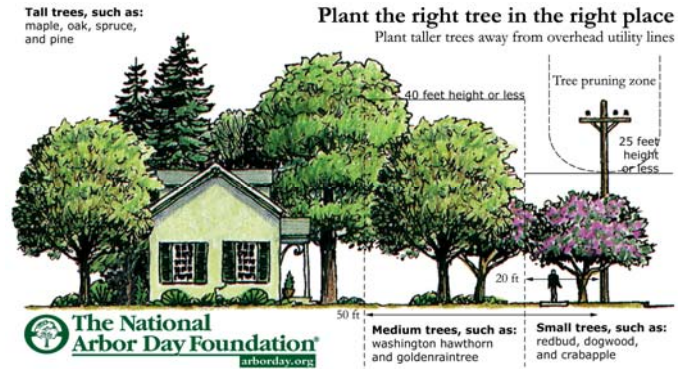
9) Use the left over soil to build a berm around the outer edge of the planting hole. This will direct water flow to the root ball where it is needed.

10) Top dress the root ball and berm with organic mulch 4 inches deep. Do not let the mulch contact the tree trunk. Taper it away from the trunk.

11) Stake the tree only if it is needed (remove all staking after one year).

12) Maintain the newly planted tree on a watering schedule for the next year. New trees should receive around an inch per week during the growing season (Spring through early Fall). Soil should remain moist, but not wet. Under and/or over watering is the worst mistake made in establishing trees.

13) Enjoy your tree and the benefits it brings you and the community.



The Urban Forestry Advisory Board selected native trees and shrubs to give away this year because they should be easy to grow and maintain, will reflect our town's unique setting as a city on the edge of the Ozarks and because many pollinators, birds and other wildlife depend only on the native plants they evolved with for food and habitat. We encourage residents to Google "Why Native Plants" to learn more. We also encourage residents to eliminate invasive plants like privet, bush honeysuckle and English ivy because they crowd out native plants and inhibit the seasonal transition of native plants that our wildlife depend on.