

Annie's Arbor Notes

Arbor Day is April 28th and this month is a perfect time to add trees to your yard that will bring sparkle to the spring color in your landscape. If someone asked me what my favorite tree in my yard is it would be my flowering crabapples. I have two giant, 30 year-old white flowering crabapple trees in my front yard that make me smile all year long. In the spring, white fluffy flowers pop out and the trees look like they are covered with cotton candy. These beautiful flowers call to the bees, which come by the hundreds to collect their nectar. The bees make the trees come alive with their buzzing song. In the summer these trees provide shade to rest under and a home for hummingbirds, robins and finches. When autumn arrives the crabapples are ripe and drop to the ground beckoning elk, deer, and bears to come and feast. Winter brings snow and ice that sits on the branches and sparkles like thousands of tiny diamonds in the sunlight. These trees stand majestic and are the guardians of my yard.

I also have pink **flowering crabapples** by the house that provide a beautiful background to my daffodils and tulips in the spring. With Arbor Day just around the corner why not head down to the closest nursery and pick up a few of these beautiful trees to add to your landscape? (Bare-root trees and shrubs are available at your nurseries now....while you're there, pick up a couple of **lilacs** and/or **forsythia** bushes to add more zip and natural aromatherapy to your yard, too.) You'll be happy you did!

How do I plant bare-root trees and shrubs??

1. Choose a spot in your yard that will give your tree or bush plenty of growing room and check with local agencies to make sure there are no underground cables, etc. before you plant.
2. Before preparing the planting hole, gently remove planting material and prune away dead or damaged roots. Soak the roots in a bucket of cold water for at least an hour and up to 8 hours.
3. To plant, dig a hole about twice as wide as the root system and deep enough to accommodate the roots.
4. Mound some soil in the center of the planting hole, forming a cone almost to the top of the hole. Set the plant on the cone so the crown is just below the soil line. Spread the roots around the cone, and refill the hole with the soil, gently pressing out any air pockets.
5. Mound more soil around the planting hole to form a 2-inch high ridge around the perimeter of the hole to act as a catchbasin. Water thoroughly, filling the basin and allowing the water to settle several times. Spread a 2-inch layer of mulch around the base of the plant, but not touching the bark.