**Trees Are Good – Selecting & Planting a Tree (Week 3)**

**Segment for Week of Aug 10, 2020**

This is Julie Callahan bringing you information on shore friendly living and gardening from the Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. This week is Part 3 of the program “Trees are Good.” This week I will be talking to you about how to select the right tree for your space.

Choosing the best tree for your situation requires careful consideration. Most homeowners make the mistake of obtaining a particular tree – maybe it brings childhood memories or was a gift to mark a special occasion - and then trying to fit it into their yard. It is better to determine what role you want your tree to play in the landscape, identify the constraints of where you want to plant it, and determine how much time and energy you want to devote to it.

First, ask “Why am I planting this tree?” Is it for beauty? Is it to add value to your landscape (large trees located in a front yard can increase a home’s value by up to 15%)? Perhaps you want a tree that will provide privacy or you may have strong winds that blow across your property and would like to have a windbreak.

Do you want a tree for shade? Trees play an important role in reducing the solar radiation that produces heat. Located on the west side of your home, a tree that loses leaves in winter will shade the house in summer, helping to save on cooling costs and energy consumption associated with greenhouse gas emissions. And, in winter, this tree will allow the warming rays of the sun to shine inside, again reducing energy costs.

Next, ask “What is the space like where I want to plant the tree?” The choice should be guided by existing conditions such as room for top and root growth, soil type, subsurface drainage (water should drain out of planting hole within 24 hours), and the kind of plants you will be able to grow under the tree. Be sure to know the maximum height and spread of a tree before selecting it. Consider obstacles such as power lines, sidewalks and sewer pipes that could influence the tree’s growth or necessitate pruning.

To keep maintenance low, avoid trees that are susceptible to storm damage (such as a Bradford pear), ones that are hosts to destructive insect and disease pests (such as a crabapple), and those that produce an over-abundance of objectionable fruit or shedding blooms, suckers or “volunteers” (such as a crepe myrtle). Native trees help to keep maintenance low and maximize climate, energy, and environmental benefits Natives are naturally adapted to the climate and provide beneficial habitat for wildlife. If a native species doesn’t make sense for you, look around your area to identify the old trees that have done well in similar situations.

For more information or for answers to your questions, contact your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office.

Here in xx, I recorded xx inches of rain this past week.