



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

Well its almost the July 4th weekend and I am ready to spend a couple of days laying in the shade on my hammock. My favorite place to stretch out is under the gigantic Red Oak in my back yard, where I will also be able to enjoy the flowers and fragrance from my linden. (Yep, noticeable flowers and fragrance from a shade tree.)



When the house was built in the early 60's it was nothing but a field, fortunately the owner at the time was a landscape contractor and he planted numerous shade trees on the property. Now some 50-odd years later I am the benefactor of his foresight. Shade trees are sited all around the property and most importantly on the southeast and northwest corners of the house. These provide relief from the heat of the summer and help keep cooling costs down, by some estimates as much as 20-40%. Be sure to site them far enough away from the house so the root system does not damage the foundation as it grows. Give them plenty of room so they do not crowd each other out (one of the mistakes

the former owner of my present home made, just too many trees for the space.)

So now you ask, what do I use, most likely something that will tolerate the heavier soils (clay) that are predominant in our area. First, let it be known that I love oaks, there is nothing as majestic in all four seasons as an old, mature oak. Several species will tolerate heavier soils and are native to the area as well. Red Oak is my favorite and a close second is Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*). One common misconception about oaks is that they are slow growers, not true. They are slow to establish, but once they get happy they grow with the best of them. Their wood is strong and the leaves hold well into the fall, making them great trees to shade your client's home come summer.

Do you have a smaller site or lot to work on where a large tree will just not fit? Consider using a smaller shade tree to accommodate the space. American Yellowwood is a great native tree, that tops out about 30-35'. If you have ever seen one in flower you would be putting one on your jobs on a regular basis. They produce long panicles of white flowers in the early summer and the foliage stays clean. In the fall they turn a rich dark yellow to top it all off.

So whether you choose maple, oak, ginkgo, linden, elm or some other species, rest assured that in 2035 or maybe a little sooner someone will be lazing the hot summer days away on their hammock, thinking to themselves "I love the shade of this tree, I sure am glad that someone planted it 20 years ago".



Mike Evans

Christensen's Plant Center
6282 Gotfredson Road
Plymouth, Michigan 48170

(734) 454-1400 voice

(734) 454-1414 fax

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