

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PURCHASING TREES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



GOOD FORM

A single straight leader and evenly spaced branches along the trunk that are balanced on each side. There should be no diseased or injured branches.

HEALTHY TRUNK

Free of injuries and decay. If a tree was grafted to root stock, the graft union be free of decay.

STANDING ON THEIR OWN

Trunks should not be propped up by staking material.

GOOD RATIO OF SHOOT TO ROOT

Space above ground to below ground. Most people focus on the size and appearance of the above-ground portion of the tree; the root systems are just as important.

CONTAINER GROWN TREES

Root flare should be at the soil surface (not buried) and soil should cling to the roots when the tree is removed from the container. Roots should not encircle the root ball because this can eventually cause the roots to girdle the tree and shorten a tree's life. The tree should be firm in the root ball; it should not sway when pulled gently

OBTAIN BIDS BEFORE PURCHASING

Request a diverse mix of trees by including some less common species in your bid. Specify a date that trees should arrive that is a few days before a planting event. This allows time to inspect and, if necessary, reject trees that do not meet specifications. Ask about policies for replacing stock that dies.

MOVING TREES NOT GROWN BY A COMMERCIAL NURSERY

The Code of Iowa states that all trees moved in Iowa must be inspected and certified by the Iowa Department of Agriculture. Even donated trees must be inspected to ensure that no pests are transported. To make arrangements for an inspection, contact the State's Entomologist's office.