



Kiefer

**Landscaping
Garden Center
& Nursery**

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NC Certified Nursery—Member NC Assoc. of Nurserymen
NC Registered Landscape Contractors #841
Interlocking Concrete Paver Institute Certified Installers
Rainbird Irrigation Certified Installers

Come October, year after year, I am asked if its "too late" to plant ornamental trees and shrubs in the landscape. My first impression is, too late for what? Unlike warm blooded mammals, fall and winter is actually a very friendly time for plants.

The fall and early winter is actually the best time to install your landscape ornamental trees and shrubs.

The soil temperature in North Carolina persists in the 50 degree range well into January, and in some years, throughout the entire winter.

- 1) Root growth continues during soil temperatures in the 50s. This translates into a better rooted plant than those planted in the spring, come the hot dry months of July and August. A better rooted plant needs less supplemental watering to survive.
- 2) Deciduous plants (those that lose their leaves) actually require very little watering when planted in the fall and winter. Since their leaves are absent, and they are losing very little water to evapotranspiration, once a week will suffice. In the spring, especially when deciduous material has just leafed out, it is very important to water regularly and not allow the plant to go under moisture stress.
- 3) Evergreen shrubs' and trees' watering requirements also decrease in the fall and early winter. Cooler temperatures reduce evapotranspirational losses of water and there is no new growth demands for increased watering.
- 4) Planting in the fall and early winter actually gives the nursery stock a much better place to overwinter than at your garden center or nursery. Most nursery plants are held above ground throughout the winter, with little, or , in most cases, no protection from the elements. We select the appropriate plants to sell to our clientele based on hardiness zone ratings and our 20 years of experience.
- 5) The cooler fall and winter temperatures are much more friendly to the planter as well as the plant. After acclimating to the heat of the summer, digging planting holes will be much less a chore in 60 degree weather than it would be planting in 70 degree weather come April, after packing on your annual winter 'insulation'.

Planting in the fall allows you to enjoy your new trees and shrubs all winter long, gives new habitat or forage to the birds in your yard, and also gives you increased growth rates come spring.