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“Making A Tree Plan”

The ground may be too frozen to plant a tree but winter is a good time for planning what trees can be planted when the weather does warm up.

Terry Hochstein, a member of the City of Norfolk Tree Advisory Board, gives the following tips for planning where to plant trees.



Terry Hochstein, City of Norfolk Tree Advisory Board member, looks over information about choosing the best location for planting a tree.

“A person needs to determine the environment that the tree will be planted in. Is it competing for water and nutrients with other established trees? Are there buried lines underneath that would prevent a tree from being planted in that area? You also need to keep the tree a fair distance from your house. A tree’s roots need to spread out nearly as wide as the crown that is above ground so you need to take into consideration patio footings and sewer lines that might be affected,” Hochstein said.

He added that it’s also wise to determine the soil conditions of the area where the tree will be planted. Some trees do not grow

well in an area where the water doesn’t drain off quickly. Other trees thrive in protected areas of a lot that don’t receive strong wind gusts. Other trees grow best in soil that has not been overly compacted or is more sandy.

“Think about why you are planting the tree and what its purpose will be. Do you want it to increase privacy, provide a windbreak or sound barrier or is it solely for aesthetics or maybe for the shade? Different trees should be planted for different purposes,” Hochstein said.

City of Norfolk ordinances specify that trees cannot be planted closer than five feet to the back of the curb of any street. It is against city law to plant evergreen trees on the land between the property line and the street known as the terrace. Trees cannot be planted closer than ten feet from any fire hydrant and only trees that grow to a maximum height of fifteen feet can be planted under overhead utility wires.

“Trees increase property values, beautify your property and may help reduce your utility bills. It’s a good idea to plan now what tree species would be best to plant near your home or business,” said Hochstein.