

POWER Source

April 2008

Customers first.
Energy that lasts.



Plant the right tree in the right place.

5 minute task

Be sure ODP has your correct phone number. Your phone number allows us to verify your service address, which means you can quickly and easily report any power outages using our automated outage reporting system. And that can help us restore service to your area more quickly. ■

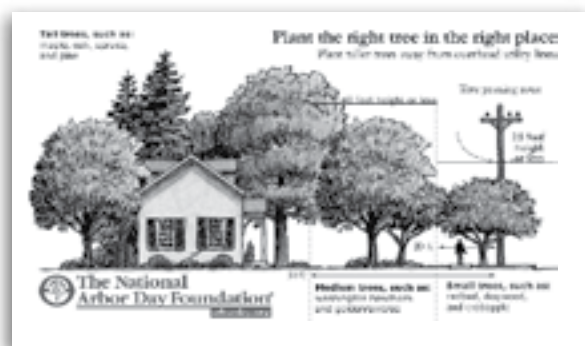
Whether you're planting a tree to celebrate Arbor Day or using landscaping to increase your home's value, adding trees to your yard is an excellent way to help reduce your energy bills. Trees can provide shade in the summer and windbreaks in the winter, so it's important to choose the right tree for the right place: **Shade trees** placed to the south and west of your home will cast cooling shadows in the summer and allow warm sun to shine in during the winter.

Just as important is how you position trees near power lines. One of the main causes of power outages is tree limbs windblown by storms into overhead lines. Before you plant, visualize your tree or shrub 10 or 15 years from now. How tall will it be? How wide will the branches spread?

- Trees that grow up to 40 feet high should be planted 20 to 30 feet from electrical lines.
 - This includes dogwood, redbuds, flowering cherry.
- Reserve only low-growing shrubs or hedges for planting within 10 feet of power lines.

Look for the yellow tag

Every refrigerator, freezer and dishwasher in the U.S. is sold with a yellow Energy Guide label that lists its energy efficiency. If you're in the market to replace your appliances, check the label for a new appliance's estimated annual operating cost and compare with other models to find the one that meets your needs. ■



- Do not plant within 10 feet of underground electrical equipment.
- Pay attention to your tree's form or shape.
 - Column-shaped trees (such as cypress and spruce) grow in less space.
 - Round (including apricot and ginkgo) and v-shaped trees (crepe myrtle, silver ash) provide the most shade.
- Avoid fruit trees that hang over busy sidewalks.
- Check the hardiness ratings for trees in our zone (typically zone 6 or 7).

You can find a complete list of trees, their growth charts and planting requirements at Arborday.org. ■

Watch or warning?

A Severe Thunderstorm Watch or Tornado Watch means conditions favor the development of these weather phenomena. If you're in the watch area, continue to be alert to the latest weather information. Watches can quickly change to warnings.

Warning means a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been reported or detected by radar in your area. Take shelter and stay tuned to weather reports.

Thunderstorms to tornadoes: how to prepare

Spring storm season is here and the months between March and August are peak opportunities for tornadoes. Storms bringing straight-line winds, rain and hail can be extremely dangerous and damaging. Determine now the safest place in your home to wait out a storm and discuss it with your family. If you don't have a basement or storm shelter, choose a small room in the center of the home (such as a bathroom or closet) and stay away from windows that can cause flying debris. Heavy furniture can provide added shelter. Designate one meeting spot outside your home, in the case of fire, and one outside the neighborhood in case there's a weather disaster and family members are away from home at the time. Creating a list after a walkthrough of every room in your home can help with insurance claims later.

Heavy storms can knock out electrical power, so it's important to create a disaster supply kit in case there is extended damage. Include a large jug of

drinking water, flashlights, blankets, non-perishable food, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries and a first-aid kit. Store your emergency kit in a waterproof container.

If severe weather occurs at night when your televisions and radios are turned off, a NOAA weather radio can be a lifesaver. Available online or from electronics stores, these radios broadcast continuous weather information from the nearest National Weather Service office, alerting you to warnings, watches and other hazards. Choose a weather radio with "SAME" technology, which can be programmed to provide information only for the county you live in.

If your power does go out, our automated outage reporting makes it easy to report downed lines and service issues. Call 800.981.0600 toll-free to quickly and easily report a problem 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ■

Hazardous home improvement

Planning a spring home improvement project? Reduce the chance of injury, power outages and property damage related to accidental line cuts by calling our offices at 800.981.0600 if you're constructing a new extension on your home. We can help you determine in advance if it will violate any building guidelines that would have to be corrected—at your expense—later. If you're

building a new room or screened-in porch, be sure the roofline won't interfere with existing power lines which would have to be moved before you begin. Position children's swing sets, swimming pools, tool sheds and other structures away from power lines that could fall and cause injury or damage. ■

Steer clear of home-improvement scams

Whether you're remodeling or cleaning up damage caused by spring storms, use only trusted contractors for the work. Ask friends and neighbors for their recommendations, and always research contractors in advance. Ask for proof that all contractors are insured, licensed and bonded. The Better Business Bureau can provide important information to help you weed out unethical or incompetent businesses.

Here are a few other tips to help you protect yourself against scams or incompetent workers as found on Bankrate.com:

Avoid contractors who say they "just happened to be working in your neighborhood" and say that they noticed some problems with your home. They may mention cracks in your driveway, missing shingles from your roof, cracked windows, etc. Even if that's true, repairs may not be needed and you should avoid being pressured to have the work done immediately. The same holds true if they offer a "special" that's good for one day only.

Be wary of businesses that go door-to-door to find customers, especially if they are driving a vehicle with no company name or phone number, or that has out-of-state license plates, and don't invite them into your home. They may be looking for something to steal.

Legitimate contractors may expect a down payment before beginning a job. However, scam artists will often insist on being **paid in full** before beginning any project.

Some scam artists may offer to clean your chimney or inspect your furnace at a price that sounds too good to be true. Next, they may claim that your chimney is in immediate need of structural repairs (which they "prove" by removing bricks and mortar from your chimney), or they may claim that your furnace is about to explode. If this happens, consult your phone book listing for a certified technician who can offer a second opinion. ■

CONTACT INFORMATION

Old Dominion Power

ODP Customer Service
Monday – Friday
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. (EST)
(800) 981-0600

24-hour Power Outages
(800) 981-0600

Business Service Center

Monday – Friday
7 a.m. – 6 p.m. (EST)
(859) 367-1200
(800) 383-5582

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