Selecting the Right Place for the Right Tree

Cindy Cartwright
September 2026

Tonight, you will learn how to:

select the best location for a tree

discern a healthy tree to purchase

Select the Best Location for a Tree

Where am I going to plant that Witch Hazel….?

Which is the best location for a tree?

Problems with As location?

Problems with As location?

“The power company insists on keeping 10 to 15 feet clear around the wire, for safety and to protect service.”

Jacqui Lee for
The Morning News

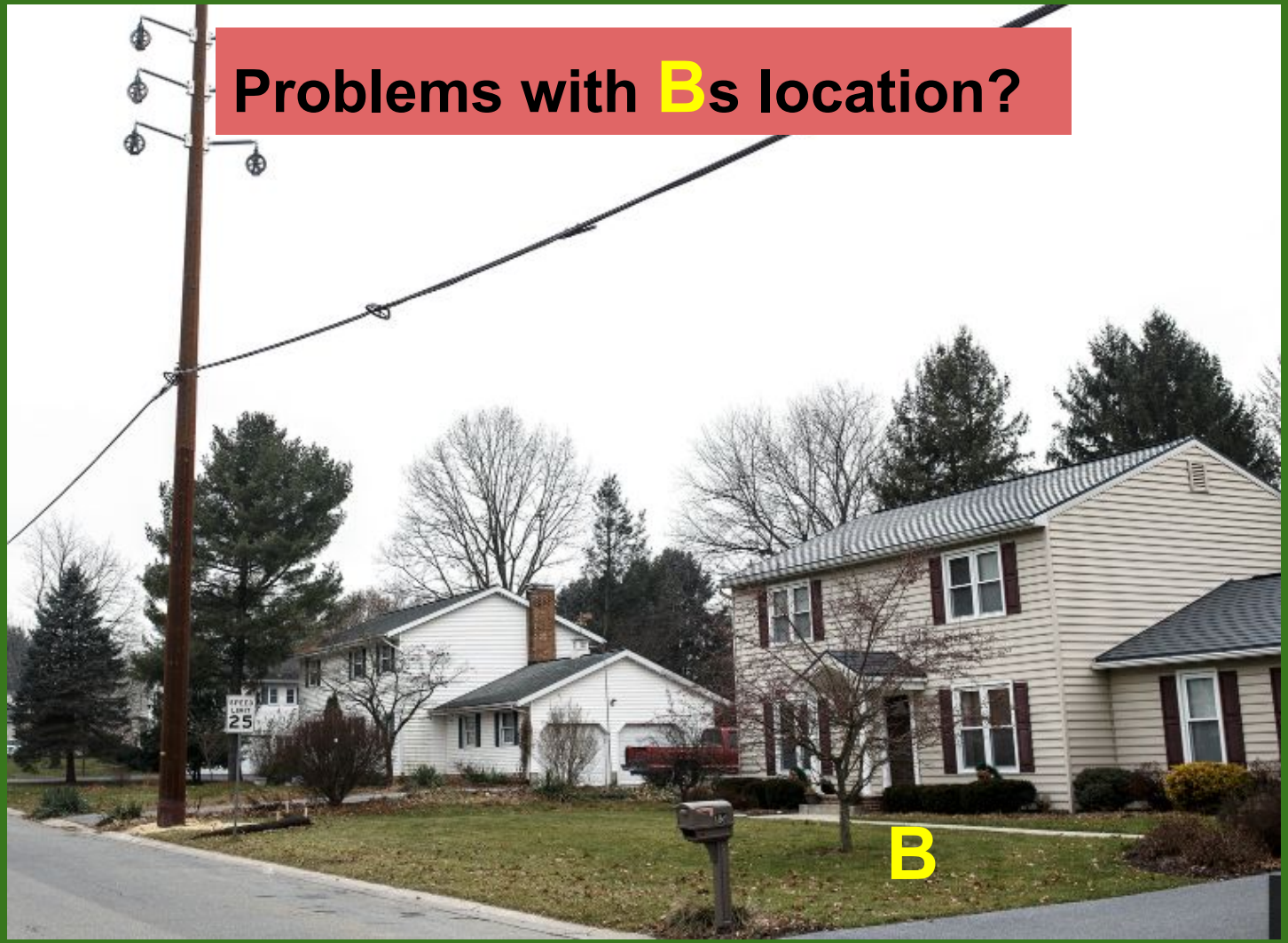
Jessica Francis Kane coined the term *arbotchery* for the act of trimming trees with only the wires in mind. https://themorningnews.org/arbotchery/

Problems with As location?

Charlottesville Code sec 5-149

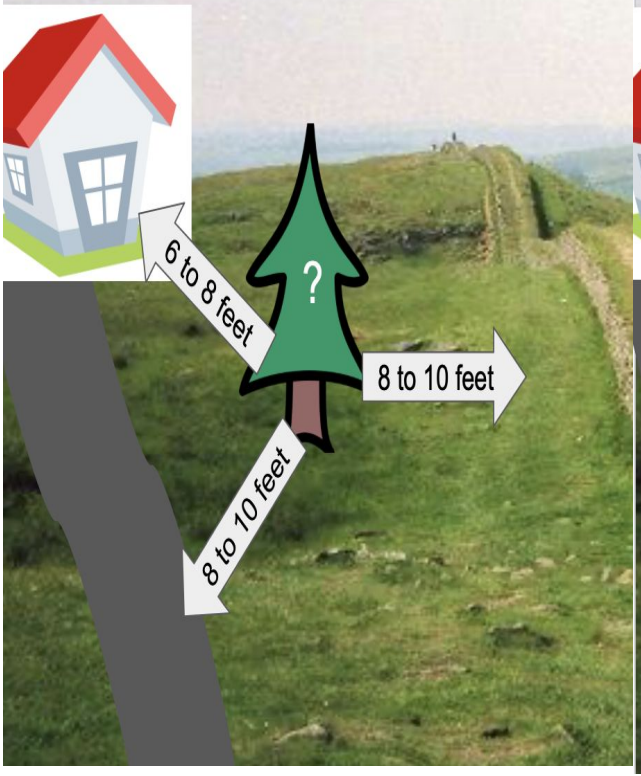
It shall be unlawful for the owner of any parcel of real estate to allow thereon any hedge, shrub, tree or other vegetation, the limbs, branches or other parts of which overhang, extend or protrude into any street, sidewalk or public alley in a manner which obstructs or impedes the safe and orderly movement of persons or vehicles thereon, or in the case of trees, when the dead limbs or branches thereof are likely to fall into or across such street or sidewalk thereby endangering such persons and vehicles. Any such hedge(s), shrub(s), tree(s) or other vegetation existing in violation of this section is hereby declared to constitute a public nuisance.

Albemarle County roadways are maintained by VDOT and overgrowth can be reported.


Problems with Bs location?
25
B

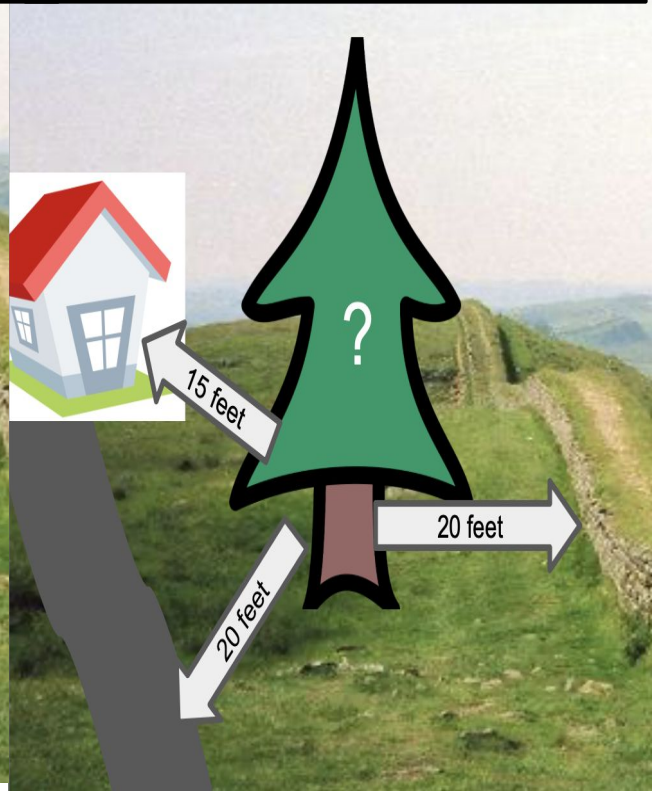
How far away from structures should you plant,

For a ***small tree***, 25 feet tall or less when mature:

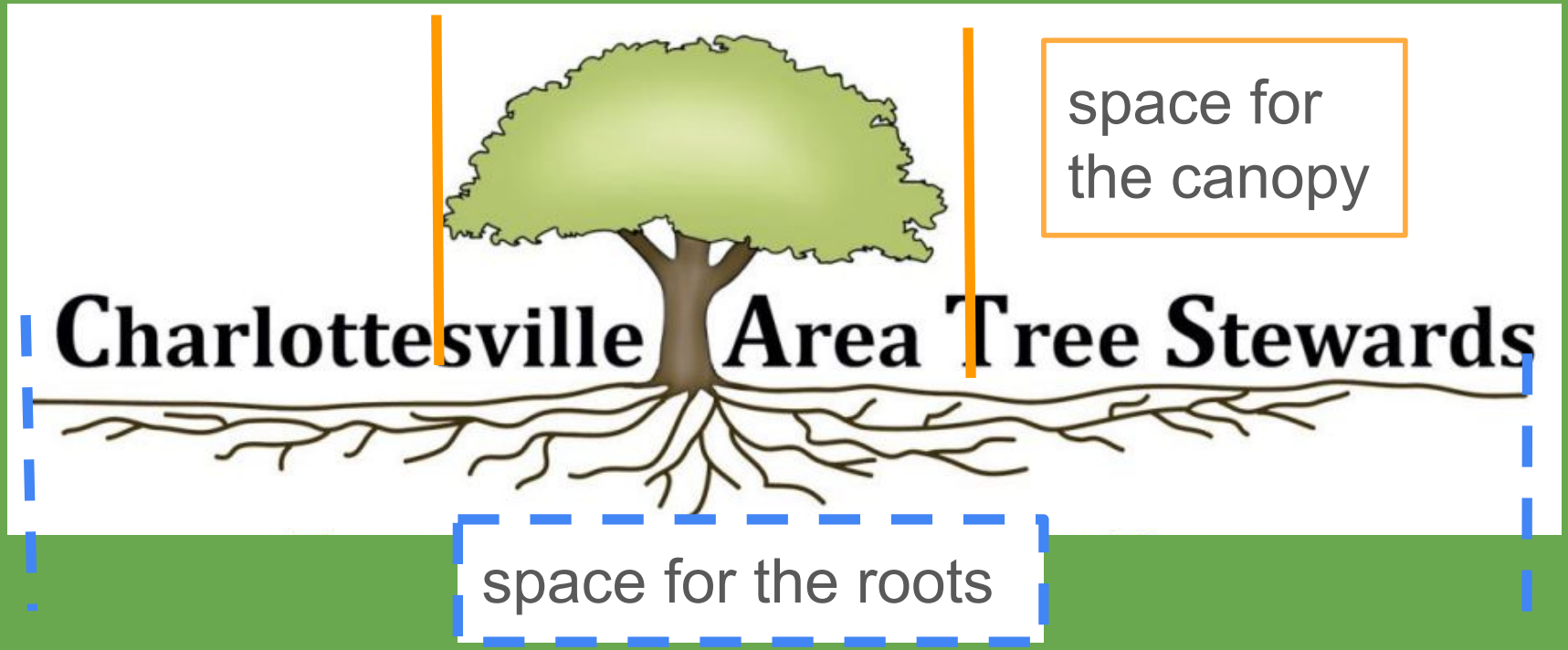


For a ***medium tree***, up to 40 feet tall when mature:

For a ***large tree***, <u>greater than 40 feet tall</u> when mature:



Why does a tree need so much space?



Problems with Bs location?

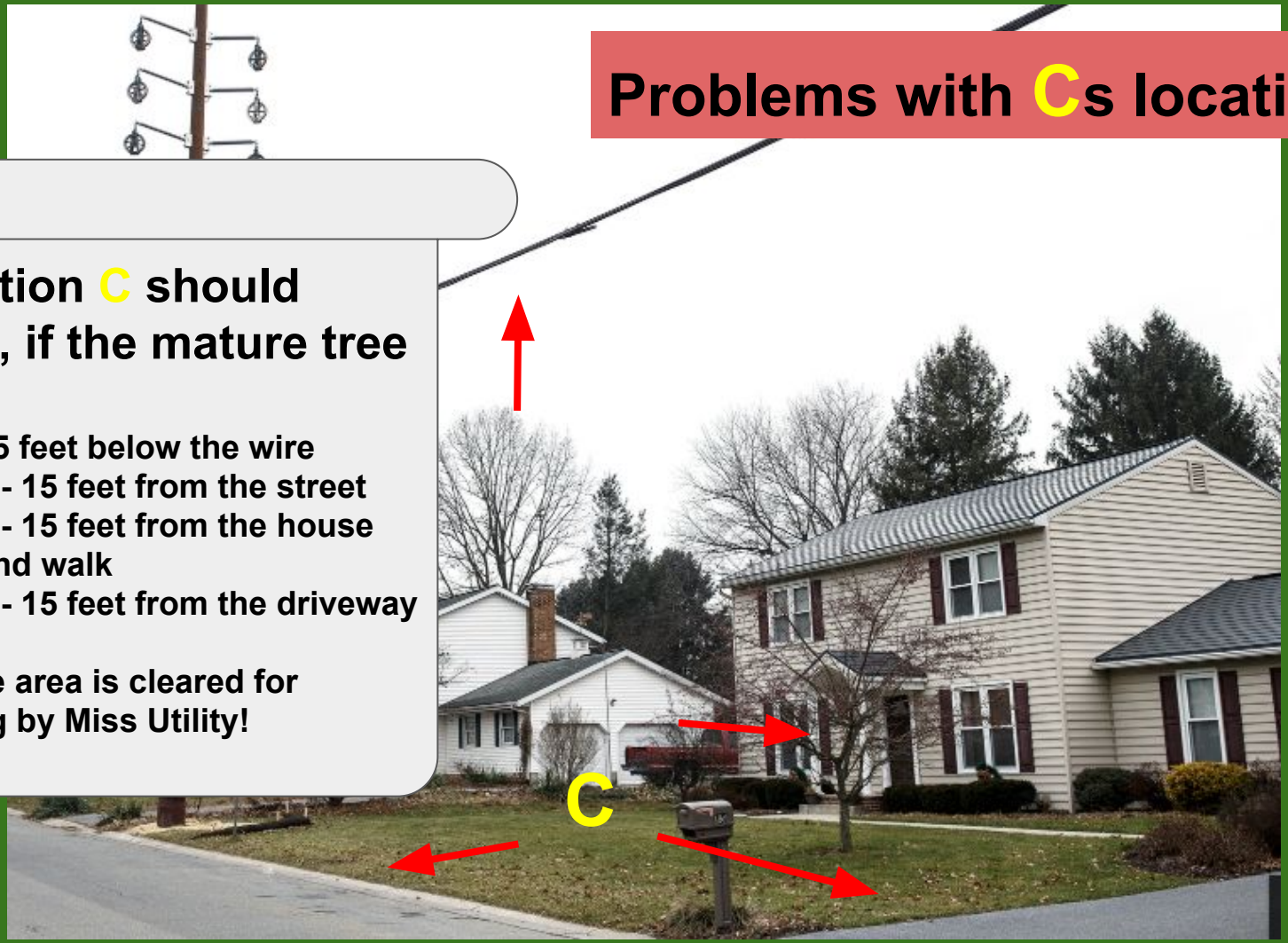
Problems with Cs location?

Problems with Cs location?

Location C should work, if the mature tree is:

- 15 feet below the wire
- 8 - 15 feet from the street
- 8 - 15 feet from the house and walk
- 8 - 15 feet from the driveway

and the area is cleared for digging by Miss Utility!



Dig with C.A.R.E. Keep Virginia Safe!

Marking Colors

- Electric
- Gas-Oil
- Communication
- Water
- Sewer
- Temporary Survey
- Irrigation
- Proposed Excavation

Call Miss Utility before you dig.

Allow required time for marking.

Respect the marks.

Excavate carefully.

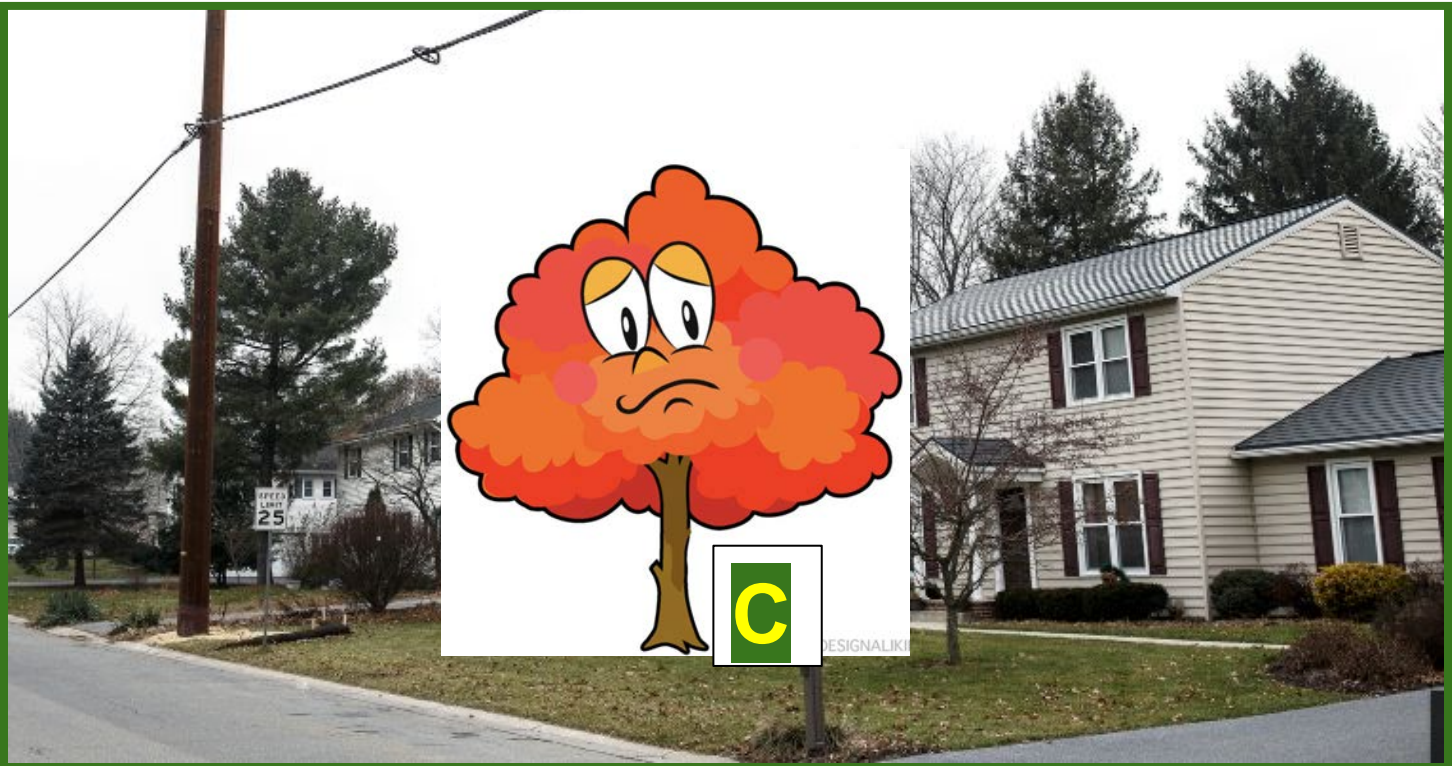
Call Miss Utility @ 811

What would Cs location be like for your view and the shade the tree will create?

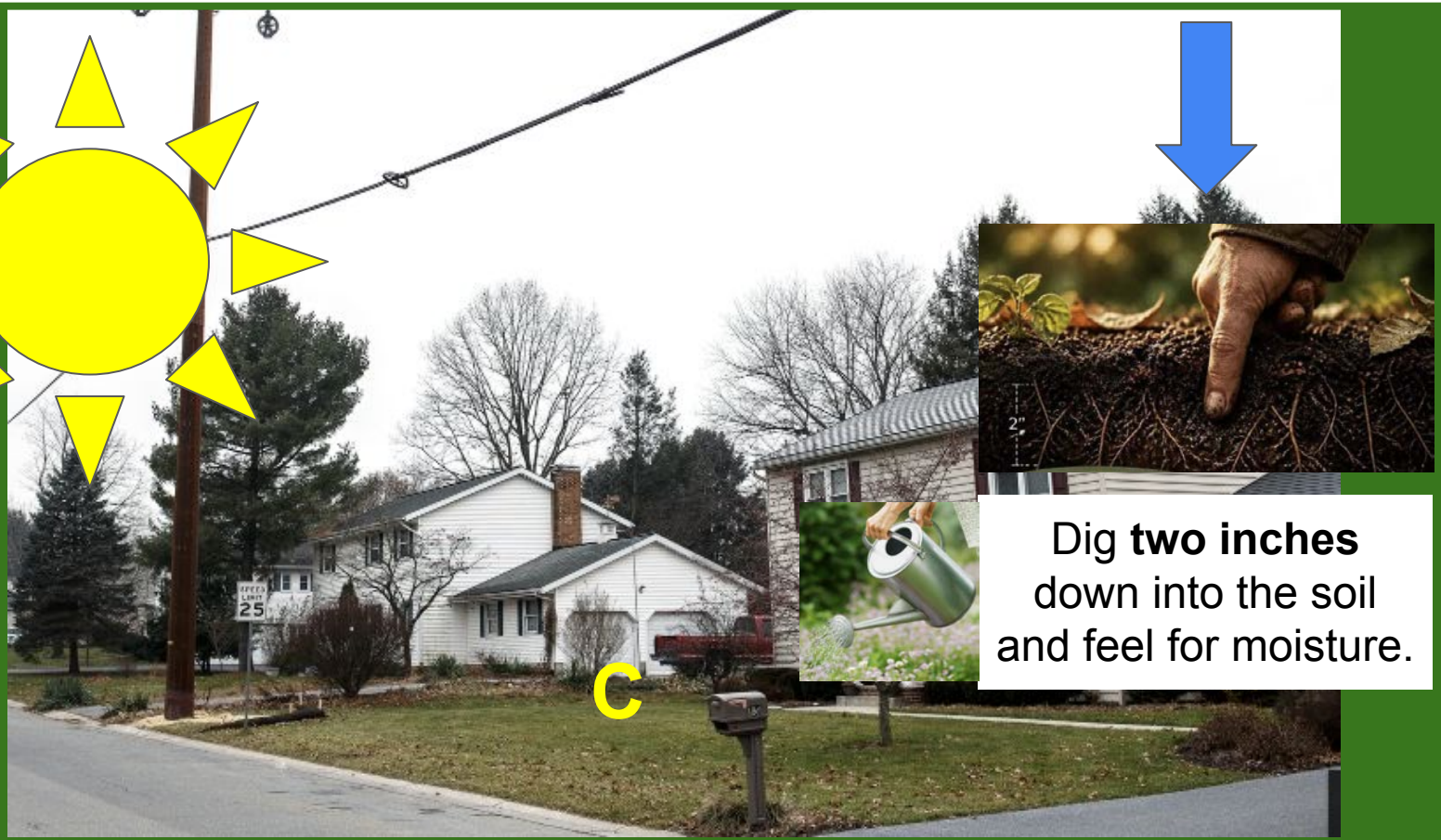
What type of tree would be best for your lawn care plans if planted in location C?

What would Cs location be like for a tree?

- How much sun should the tree expect?
- How much moisture does the soil hold?

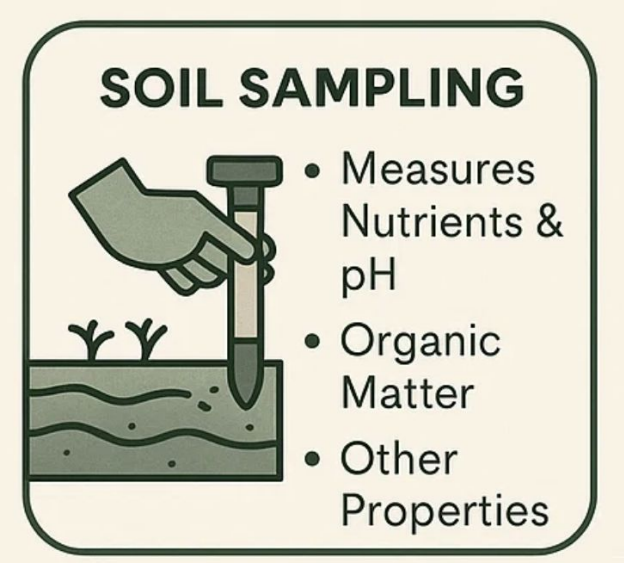


C would received full sun and appears well drained.



Dig **two inches** down into the soil and feel for moisture.

If the area you've chosen struggles to grow any plants, test the soil.

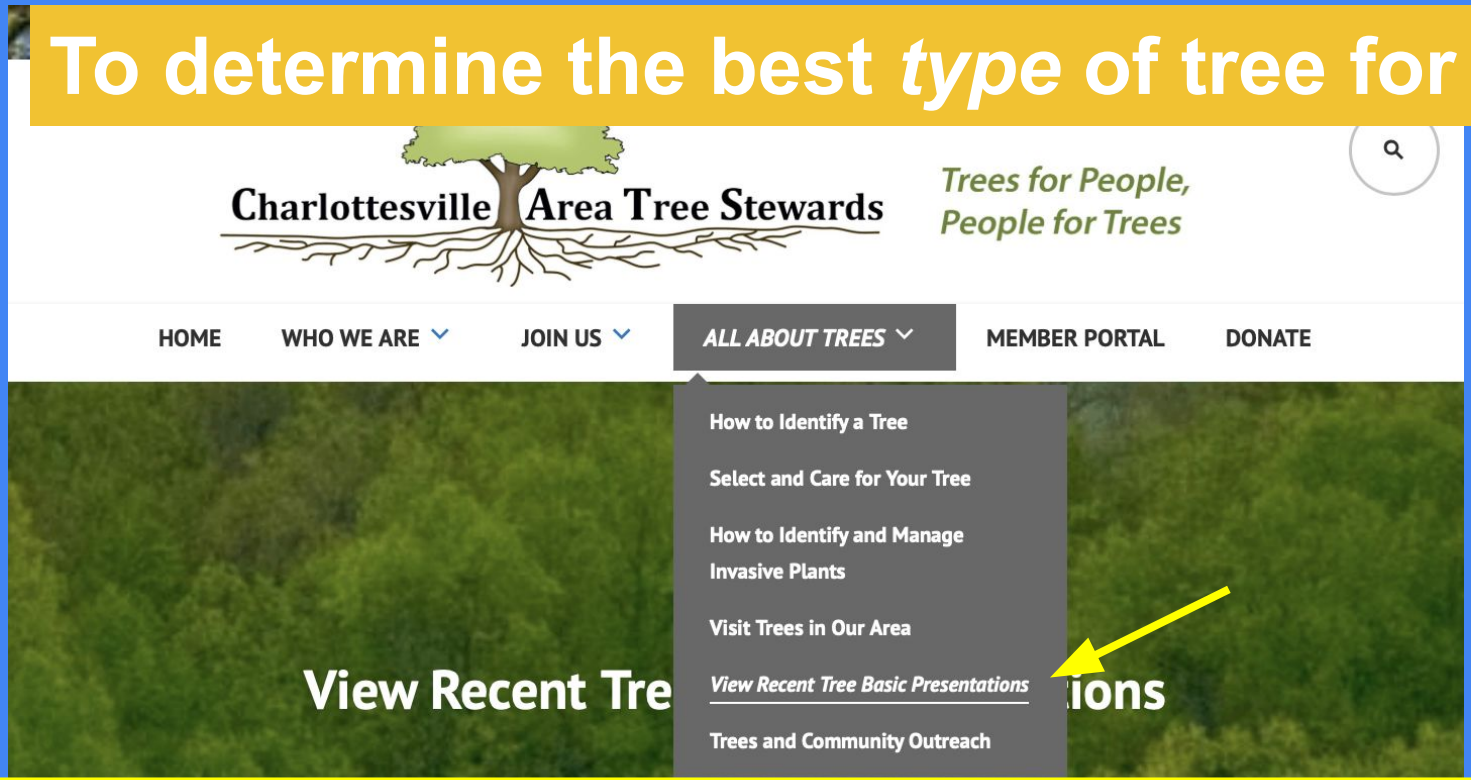


Free Soil Test Sample Kits available for pickup!
Kits can be picked up at:
Virginia Cooperative Extension
460 Stagecoach Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902
or
$15 at Blue Ridge Farmer's Coop

Location C would be great for a tree that:

- is small to medium
- needs full sun
- requires well-drained soil

To determine the best *type* of tree for you:



Tree Talk Classes from Winter & Spring 2026

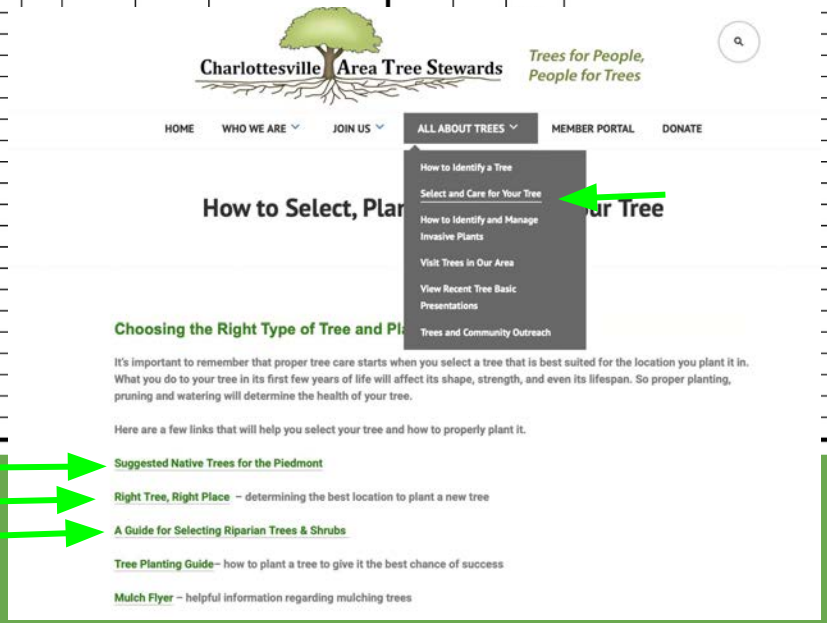
- The Best Trees & Shrubs for Wildlife and You (ICNA) August 17, 2026 – See slides from presentation here.

Right Tree/Right Place Tree List

Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards

Compiled by Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards from many sources.

	physical characteristics					growing conditions				habitat indicators					suitable landscape locations					
Common name	**Botanic name**	**Evergreen**	**Height**	**Spread**	**Crown Form**	**Hardiness zone**	**Heat zone**	**Light conditions**	**Soil conditions**	**Drought tolerant**	**Air pollution tolerant**	**Salt tolerant**	**Fruit/nut producing**	**# of caterpillar species**	**Streets**	**Paved plazas**	**Parking islands**	**Parks, Lawns**	**Buffers, screening**	**Bioretention**
Pecan	*Carya illinoinensis*		75-100	45-70	vase	**5-9**		☼	moist, well drained, acidic				**nut**							
Persimmon	*Diospyros virginiana*		35-60	25-35	columnar	7-10	9-1	☼ ☼	adap well drained	✓	**n/a**	**n/a**	**fruit**	46				✓		✓
Pine, Eastern White	*Pinus strobus*	x	50-80	20-40	pyramidal	3-7	7-1	☼	moist well drained					201				✓	✓	
Plum																				
American	*Prunus americana*												**fruit**							
Chickasaw	*Prunus angustifolia*									✓			**fruit**							
Redbud	*Cercis canadensis*									✓	✓			19	✓			✓		
River Birch	*Betula nigra*									✓	✓	✓		12				✓		✓
Sassafras	*Sassafras albidum*																			
Serviceberry	*Amelanchier arborea*											**n/a**	**berry**	124				✓		✓
Sourwood	*Oüydendrum arboreum*																			
Spicebush	*Lindera benzoin*																			
Sumac	*Rhus spp.*																			
Sweetgum	*Liquidambar styraciflua*									✓		**n/a**		35	✓			✓		✓
Sycamore	*Platanus occidentalis*									✓	✓			45				✓		✓
Tulip Tree	*Liriodendron tulipifera*										**n/a**	**n/a**		21				✓		✓
Viburnum																				
Arrowood	*Viburnum dentatum*																			
Blackhaw	*Viburnum prunifolium*									✓			**berry**	104		✓		✓	✓	
Possumhaw	*Viburnum nudum*																			
Walnut, black	*Juglans nigra*												**nut**							
Witch Hazel	*Hamamelis virginiana*											**n/a**		53				✓	✓	✓
Yellowood	*Cladrastris kentukea*									✓	**n/a**	✓		0	✓			✓		
Zelkova	*Zelkova japonica*										✓	✓		**0**	✓			✓		



Right *Tree*, Right Place

Select the Best Tree to Purchase for the Full Sun, Well-Drained Front Yard

Don’t by a tree with dead or diseased foliage.

a. Trees with excessive, visible root growth have probably even greater root problems inside the pot.

Root Collar or Flare: area at the base of the tree where the trunk/stem widens and the major roots begin

root system below ground

b. Roots below the root flare should not be exposed in a new container tree.

a. Trees with obvious damage should be avoided.

Where is the root collar?

b. Effects of burying the trunk:

-bark deterioration

-development of adventitious roots that can choke off the tree

-access to oxygen reduced by 10% for every inch the trunk is buried too low

Walk away from trees with significant crossing branches.

True or False: *I should purchase this tree!*

- Healthy leaves
- No obvious roots
- Root collar at soil line
- No damage to trunk
- No serious crossing branches
- Available at the CATS sale!

CATS Fall Tree Sale on October 3rd 2026

Starts at 10:00 am, come early for the best selection

PLEASE NOTE: Limit of 10 trees per customer, 2 of any one variety.

PRICING: $6, $12 & $16

LARGE TREES:

Birch, River
Cypress, Bald
Redwood, Dawn
Maple, Red
Oak, Legacy White
Oak, Swamp White
Oak, White
Oak, Willow
Pine, Shortleaf
Sweetgum
Tulip

SMALL & MEDIUM TREES:

Magnolia, Sweetbay
Pawpaw
Persimmon
Plum, American
Serviceberry, Allegheny
Serviceberry, Shadblow

DOGWOODS & REDBUDS:

Dogwood, Pagoda
Dogwood, Silky
Dogwood, White
Dogwood, Red Stem
Redbud

SHRUBS:

Bayberry, Northern
Beautyberry, American
Buttonbush
Elderberry
Hazelnut
Ninebark
Spicebush
Sweet Pepper Bush
Sweetspire, Virginia
Viburnum, Blackhaw

Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards

Trees for People, People for Trees

at the
Virginia Department
of Forestry
900 Natural Resources Dr
#800, Charlottesville

Right Tree, Right Place

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https://www.arborday.org/perspectives/planting-right-tree-right-place

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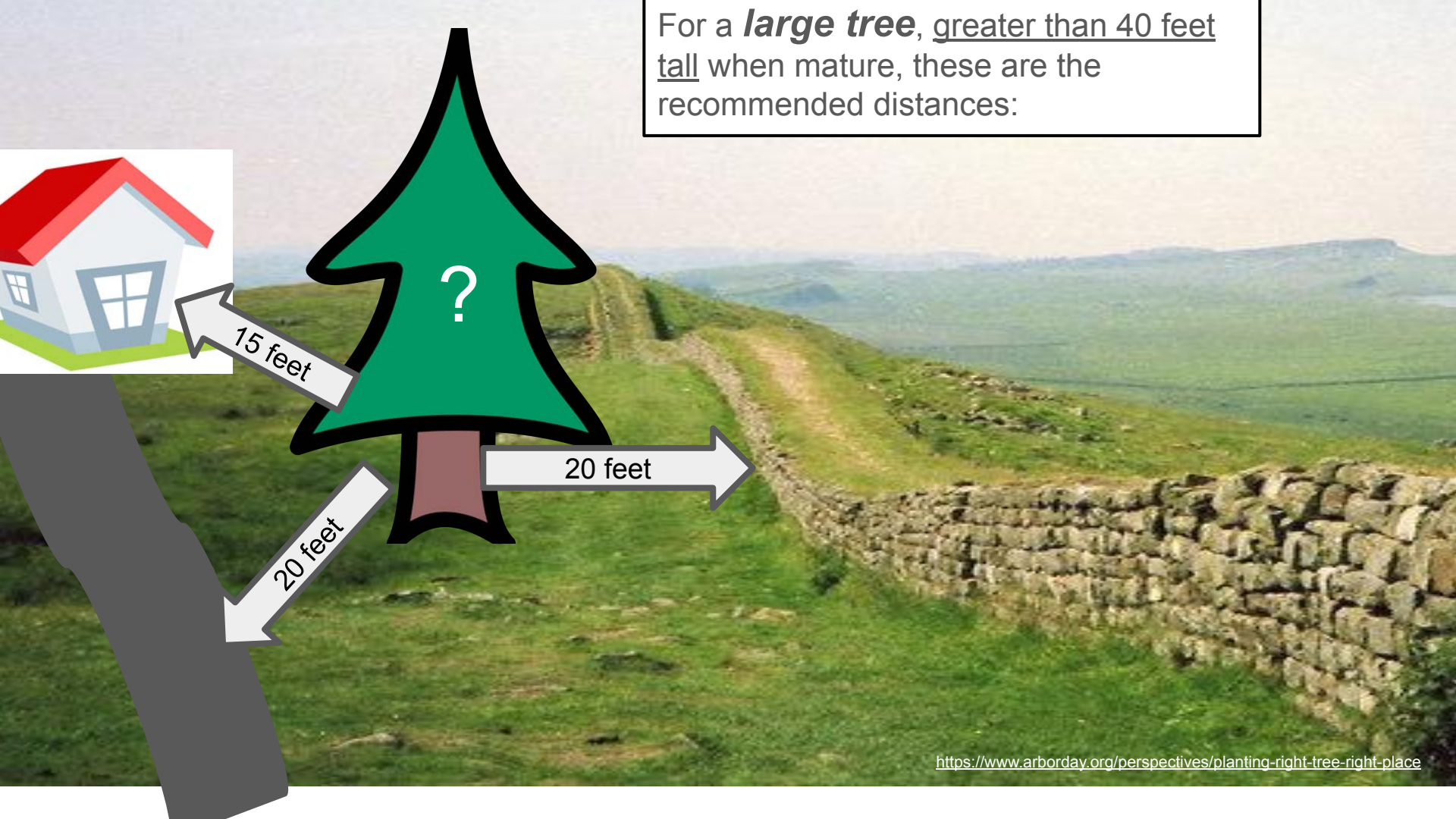

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