**Primetime**

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**Planting Narcissi and Shade Trees**

There is a whole family of blooming bulbs called narcissi. Many of them naturalize in area landscapes to provide attractive foliage and blooms every winter. Paperwhites and daffodils are two of the narcissi to consider.

Paperwhites offer clusters of white flowers on stalks that rise above the lush green foliage. They are especially desirable because they bloom in December or January, readily naturalize in the sun or partial shade, are not bothered by pests (including deer), tolerate poor soils, and are good xeriscape plants.

Plant the bulbs about 4 inches deep and 6 inches apart in clusters. You can water them or rely entirely on rain. The bulbs are replenished and spread if you let the foliage decline to brown on its own before cutting them back.

Daffodils are closely related. We generally see them as offering larger blooms on individual stalks. The flowers are usually yellow but some selections are white. Unfortunately the most well known daffodil, King Alfred does not naturalize here. Look for Trevithian,Campernelle, Quail, and Grand Primo. Grand Primo has a white flower.

Like paperwhites, daffodils are tough and deer proof. Expect them to bloom after paperwhites in late January or early February.

A new shade tree in your landscape will need more water to become established than daffodils but as the years progress a well adapted, well placed shade tree pays for itself many times over. A shaded lawn uses significantly less water than grass in full sun and a house shaded by trees uses less power for air conditioning.

Select a well adapted long lived tree. Among my favorites are Texas red oak, Mexican white oak, cedar elm, Montezuma cypress, bur oak, chinkapin oak, Mexican sycamore, lacey oak, live oak, and Chinese pistache.

Place the tree on the south or west side of the building you want to shade. Large shade trees planted in the lawn need to be at least 30 feet apart. Fifty feet apart is even better.

Do not plant your new tree under utility wires or too close to the house. The 30 feet rule works well there as well.

Buy a tree of the size that matches your ability to dig its hole and move it to the hole. A 1.5 inch diameter tree is easier to move to its planting site, and will adjust to its new home and grow faster than a newly planted large tree.

Dig the hole just as deep as the root ball and 2 or 3 times as wide. Fill in the hole with native soil. The addition of potting soil or other additives generally do not speedup establishment or growth. The tree must eventually put roots in the native soil. If you select a well adapted tree species, it is perfectly capable of doing so.

Soak the hole and root ball at planting. The water is essential for a fast start and helps eliminate any air pockets. Fertilizer can be added next spring at the rate of a cup per inch of diameter.

Cover the root ball with 4 inches of mulch and re-water every time the soil dries under the mulch. It will probably be every 2 weeks this winter and once per week next summer.

If you plant a shade tree there is a good possibility you can receive a $50 rebate from CPS Energy. Select a well adapted tree on their list and plant it according to their reasonable specifications and they will provide a rebate on your power bill. Applications and more information are available at your favorite nursery or on CPS Energy’s website at “www.cpsenergy.com. “