



Ken Tolonen, Master Gardener, and "Chip" Rognlie, City Park arborist, plant a Linden tree near the public work office on Fruitvale Avenue.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER GARDENERS

# Plant a Tree This Arbor Day

Given the hotter summers from climate change, trees are ever more important.

by Diana Pieti for Yakima Valley Master Gardeners

**P**lease put April 29th on your calendar. This is **Arbor Day**, and we can't think of a better time to talk about trees.

Though we have some rough weather both in winter and summer, we sometimes forget from time to time what it was like once we move on to another season. But who can forget triple digits last summer that ruined crops, scorched so much of our landscape, and burned some of our plant material so badly we had to remove it and plant again.

Trees might have helped that problem some. Established trees provide such a cooling effect in your yard, but even small trees and shrubs could have shaded some of our smaller plants.

We say make this the year you plant your first tree or add to those that are already established. And let's list all the reasons why you should beyond what we have already written.

Trees provide shelter, nesting areas and maybe food for songbirds. When choosing trees, think of those that provide more than one need. Planting trees such as elderberries, serviceberries, and chokecherries, will help provide food. When you plant shrubs or trees that have a tight branch habit, you provide shelter that could help keep birds warm



Annette Olson and Joan Sousley admire a new planting for Arbor Day.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTER GARDENERS

in winter or hide them from their predators. And most important, fruit trees provide food for the family.

All landscaping can add value to your property. When people are looking at homes to buy, established trees are always in favor.

Consider trees that give you year-round interest. We love spring blooms, summer shade, fall leaf color, and interesting or colorful twigs and branches for winter. When doing your research, ordering online or shopping local nurseries, be mindful if the trees are in pots or bare rooted. In the early spring you will find many that are bare rooted, and if you choose to buy, you need to keep their roots moist, and plant them as soon as you can. You do not want those roots to dry out.

Before you pay the price, make sure you consider if they really like to grow here. If ordering online, you might be choosing trees or shrubs that like warm weather year-round. It pays to shop local. Also take into consideration the height at maturity and where you choose to plant. Will they grow into the powerlines? Will the roots invade a septic tank or cause havoc with the sidewalk? Many trees might not be the best for small areas.

We encourage you to visit our local arboretum and take walks through our local parks where you can see so many possibilities.

When you are ready to plant, dig a hole twice as wide as the roots, and if those roots have burlap on them, remove it. Some tags will recommend you leave that in place but in our area that burlap takes years to rot away and will limit your root growth. Do not amend your soil, as you want those roots to quickly begin growing in the soil it will have for the rest of its life. Make sure you only cover with soil to the line that is already established on your tree. Leave a small, indented area right round the tree itself and water it well. Be mindful that newly established trees will need frequent watering to get them established.

As a project for our 40<sup>th</sup> year celebration  
(1980-2020) of our Yakima Master Gardener program  
we purchased trees for the city of Yakima and Union  
Gap.

