Village of Medina

Municipal Tree Board

600 Main Street Medina, New York 14103

" Roots in the past, planting for the future. "

What Kind of Tree Should I Plant?

Nyssa sylvatica Black Gum

The Tree Board receives many inquiries about planting trees, that usually begin with the statement, "I'd like to plant a tree." The next question from the Tree Board is, "What kind of tree did you have in mind?" This most often results in a puzzled look and a response of, "I guess I never really thought about it... maybe... a maple?"

Maple trees are beautiful trees and are often people's favorite because they are the most recognizable tree, and are associated with fantastic fall color... but there are many more species of trees that are equally beautiful, and some even more so that should be considered. This is one area where the Tree Board can be of great assistance to a citizen who wants to plant a tree on the right of way.

Medina has many, many maple trees. In fact, over 80% are maple trees which presents a problem. The over planting of one species of tree, in Medina's case the Silver Maple, creates a monoculture that can lead to pest and disease problems, and the overall decline of a municipal forest. For instance, a disaster could result if say 60 percent of those Silver Maples were to die due to those conditions. The Tree Board is attempting to diversify species within the village, ultimately creating a village forest with no more than 10% of one species, 20% from the same genus.

Tree selection is one of the most important investment decisions a home owner can make. Considering that most trees have the potential to outlive the

people who plant them, the impact of this decision is one that can influence a lifetime. Match the tree to the site, and both lives will benefit.

So, when someone asks the Tree Board, "What kind of tree should I plant?", a number of factors need to be considered.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- **Why is the tree being planted?**
- **Do you want the tree to provide shade, flowers, or seasonal color?**
- **What is the size and location of the planting site?**
- **Does the space support a large, medium, or small tree?**
- **Are there overhead wires or below ground utilities in the vicinity?**
- **Do you need to consider clearance for sidewalks?**
- **Are there other trees in the area?**
- **Are there barriers to future root growth?**
- **Which type of soil conditions exist?**
- **Is the soil deep, fertile, and well drained?**
- **Or is it shallow, compacted, and infertile?**
- **Is the site exposed to salt, salt spray, wind, and/or heat?**

The answers to these questions will help you choose the "right tree for the right place" and your Tree Board can help guide you through this process.

Trees make your surroundings more pleasant. Properly placed and cared for, trees increase the value of your real estate. A large shade tree provides relief from summer's heat. An ornamental tree provides beautiful flowers, leaves, bark, or fruit. Street trees decrease the glare from pavement, reduce runoff, filter out pollutants, and add oxygen to the air we breath. Street trees also improve the overall appearance and quality of life in a city or neighborhood.

A basic principle of modern architecture is "form follows function." Selecting the right form (shape) to complement the desired function (what you want the tree to do) can significantly reduce maintenance costs. When making a selection about form, also consider mature tree size. Trees grow in a variety of

sizes and shapes. They can vary in height from several inches to several hundred feet. A form and size must be selected that will fit the planting space provided.

Depending on your site restrictions, you can choose from among hundreds of combinations of form and size. You may choose a small-spreading tree in a location with overhead utility lines. You may select a narrow, columnar form for a narrow space. You may choose large, vase-shaped trees to create an arbor effect over a street. You may even determine that the site just does not have enough space for a tree of any kind.

Tree Shapes

Columnar   Round   Vase   Weeping   Pyramidal   Oval   Irregular