

Home Improvement Guide

Island Handy For Kitchen

A kitchen island is a great thing to have, and one can be added to many existing kitchens. Often the island is designed for a special operation—cooking or salad making. But the best plan is to let it work as auxiliary space for every other work center in the kitchen, and to build it three or more inches lower than standard counter height. Then lower surface is ideal for rolling out pastries, beating, creaming and blending.

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Tips on Gardening

By Betty Frankel

SHADE TREES

Imagine, if you can, a world without trees. It is not easy to do. The prairie presents mile after mile of waving grasses, but cottonwood trees cluster along each deep-cut stream. The desert has its palm tree oases, and even the boundless sea has tropical islands clothed with lush jungle trees. Trees are so much a part of our environment that we tend to take their importance as an element in the landscape. Perhaps only those who live in newly created, bare subdivisions have the feeling of a treeless world.

No other vegetation can create the atmosphere of beauty and charm and security that trees give. Picture in your mind Washington's Mount Vernon without its magnificent trees, or just mentally erase the trees from your favorite Farmington scene. It is possible for a home to be well landscaped without the usual shrubbery, using only trees. However, if there are no trees to frame the view of the house or provide a background or an accent, something important is missing. The landscaping is somehow not satisfying.

Trees are the most permanent item in the landscape planting. Once established they demand almost no attention and endure indefinitely. In the long run they are the least costly item in the planting scheme, although the initial cost may seem higher than that of shrubs or flowers. Because they are a permanent investment, care should be taken in selecting trees and in locating them on the home grounds.

Much of the esthetic value of a tree derives from the suggestion of comfort that it may give. In addition to providing shade in an appropriate place, or acting as a windbreak, trees can be placed so that they obscure an ugly view, or partly hide a building enhancing the view of it or revealing only the most desirable features. Trees can be used to frame a view or create a vista. Clumps of trees on the summit of a small hill will make it seem taller and a valley deeper, and the placing of groups of tall trees and low trees will create an uneven skyline that will give the illusion of rolling terrain on flat land.

Do not merely plant trees. Use them! Do not over-do, though. Use them sparingly so each will serve to best advantage. Consider the character of the tree and choose the right tree for the right spot. There are literally hundreds of species from which to choose. Small, flowering trees are often best for small lots and small gardens. The large shade trees can be used to advantage on most suburban properties as well as along city streets. Choose wisely, plant carefully and enjoy the esthetic and practical benefits that only a tree can provide.

All of the oaks are excellent trees. Among the best are white oak, red oak, scarlet oak and pin oak. They are sturdy and relatively fast growing. They have a good structure and attractive foliage that turns a beautiful color in autumn. The leaves of white oak and pin oak cling to the tree throughout the winter.

The sugar maple is deservedly the best known and most beloved of the maple trees. It is a fine tree with beautiful autumn foliage. It seems to grow well in most locations with the

exception of heavy clay soils. The Norway maple and its special varieties such as Schwedler's maple and Crimson King maple are excellent landscape specimens. They are healthy, dense trees that grow moderately quickly. One of the most beautiful trees is the swamp maple, *Acer rubrum*. This good-sized tree has leaves that turn a brilliant red hue. The seed-keeps, too, are a brilliant rose-red. This tree should be used more frequently in landscape planting and will grow well in most situations.

The white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) is a good shade tree that is becoming increasingly popular as a landscape specimen. It grows to a large size and has attractive light green compound leaves. The thornless honey locusts are good trees, too. They have feathery foliage that casts a light shade and an attractive horizontal branch structure.

Sweet gum (*Liquidambar*) and sour gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)

are both handsome trees. The latter has foliage that is brilliant in fall.

REMINDERS
"Michigan Trees", by Otis is a good book to consult for information about our native trees. . . . When planting large shade trees as specimens allow 50 to 100 feet between them. For mass planting or to make

a thicket they may be planted as close as 12 feet. . . . Small trees can be moved bare rooted but large trees need a ball of earth around the roots. . . . When planting a tree make the hole two feet wider than the root spread and somewhat deeper. Set the tree at the same depth at which it had been growing.

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