



## LET YOUR SITE CHOOSE THE PLANTS

**SOIL:** Begin learning about your site with a soil test. The results will tell you your soil's pH and fertility, two of the most important pieces of information that you must have when making a plant selection.

Look at your soil's consistency and drainage characteristics. Is the soil loose or compacted? Is it clayey, sandy or loamy? Is it rocky and shallow or chalky and poorly drained? Is it elevated, depressed, or sloping? Does water stand at any time of the year? Different plants have different tolerances for these conditions and you're best off planting a tree or shrub that will be happy in the soil you have to offer.

**EXPOSURE:** Is the planting site sunny or shady? Be sure to check how many hours and at what time of day, your plants will have direct sunlight.

**WATER:** Note the amount of rainfall that you can expect your new shrubs or tree to receive and consider how you will get water to it during a dry spell. If your watering resources are limited, select plants that can tolerate occasional drought.

## GROUP PLANTS WHERE POSSIBLE

Consider another strategy for success: safety in numbers.

Plants benefit greatly when arranged together in beds. Trees and shrubs sharing a bed will usually have more rooting space than if each were off in its own planting hole. A group of plants also tend to create its own microclimate. Humidity in the immediate area is higher, wind is reduced, roots are shaded and cooled. Plants grouped in a bed and adequately mulched fare better at avoiding nicks, cuts and other hardships caused by errant lawn mowers and their operators. Since lawn mower damage is the leading cause of mechanical injury to trees, this aspect alone is reason enough to plant trees and shrubs in groups.