

**FOR RELEASE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 10, 2016**

**TITLE: PLANTING IN DEAD OF WINTER OKAY IN GEORGIA  
LANDSCAPES**

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If you just can't wait to plant that special landscape tree, why wait? In Georgia, the dead of winter isn't all that dead.

We have such great weather for roots: they don't really have a dormant period here. People in landscaping can learn a lesson from commercial foresters. In January and February, they're busy planting pines across countless Georgia acres.

Why don't they wait until spring? Because, there's much more harm in waiting too long, than in planting too early.

Roots are active and growing in a lot colder soil than people may think. As the weather warms in spring, the roots get a head on the foliage. And that's the way it should be, because the aboveground parts of the tree depend greatly on the root system underground.

In Georgia, summer is the real test. You need to give the roots as much time as you can to get established before it gets hot. The hardest part now may be in finding the tree. But if you go to a good nursery or garden center, you will probably find plants more available than you thought.

Go to a reputable nursery or garden center and pick out the tree you want. A Georgia grown tree is best. It will be more adapted to our climate and less prone to environmental stress.

Choose a place in your landscape where the tree will have plenty of room when it's mature. Then plant the tree in a big, well prepared hole.

Add two to three inches of organic mulch over an area extending well beyond the root ball. That will help keep the soil temperature and moisture more even. Water it well. That is critical, even when the winter cold and spring's mild weather don't remind you of the need.

You really need to baby your tree through the first year. Make sure it gets the water regularly. Do whatever you need to do to protect it from lawn mowers, string trimmers, children, pets, and anything else that might injure it.

Then, during drought times for the first three years, water the tree. If you do all that, you should have a healthy tree that will outlive you.