

# BIG TREES easy to transport

by JASON COX

Until recently, real estate developers relied on small, easily managed trees for landscapes. These trees often took decades to assume the finished look the developer had in mind at the beginning of the project.

Thanks to improved technology and equipment, mature trees, whether on-site or miles away, can be used in almost any setting to enhance a landscape.

Full mature trees give depth and scale to a landscape, and increase environmental

"usability." Their shade cools a hot summer sun. They offer privacy, increase property value, complement architecture and provide a habitat for wildlife. With grown trees, there's no second-guessing their ultimate shape and height.

## The right contractor

Trees are perishable, so develop procedures to increase their survival chances after the move.

► Make sure the contractor has a **proven track record**. Companies should have extensive experience in moving trees of the size and specie that you want.

► Does the contractor **know the area**? Trees imported from locations near the project site typically adapt faster to the micro-environment and are likely to encounter similar soil types. They also preserve the ecological integrity of a project and blend well with other features of the landscape.

► Ask about **follow-up care**. The key to ensuring the survival of recently transplanted trees is proper watering, which is often the site manager's responsibility. Good companies offer extra services that can increase the survival of newly-acquired trees. Mulching and sanding prevent evaporative loss from the top of the rootball. Crown reduction pruning can compensate for any root loss occurring during the transplant.

## Big trees a specialty

Thanks to dramatic improvements in transplanting technology, a few companies offer giant tree relocation services. With equipment designed to accommodate trees ranging up to 36-inches in caliper and weighing more than 400,000

## Three methods

### New spade for massive trees

Environmental Design/Instant Shade, a Houston-based contractor, recently developed 14-foot and 16-foot tree spades capable of transporting rootballs measuring up to 30 cubic yards. The most affordable way to transplant giant trees is also the most versatile. With this technique, trees can be relocated from sites many miles away.

### Roundballing

For on-site transplants, roundballing is a viable option. With this method, the rootball is hand-dug and wrapped in burlap and wire. The technique permits the transplant of trees larger than those that would be available with traditional and upgraded spades. Trees are ultimately crane-set into their final setting.

### Boxing

Like roundballing, boxed trees are hand-dug and crane set, but instead of burlap and wire, steel plates are fastened to the rootball for overland transport. This is the method of choice for distant project sites that need giant trees.

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With the 'boxing' method, steel plates are fastened to the rootball for overland transport.

pounds, a developer is limited only by budget and imagination. In terms of economics, larger trees are a more cost-efficient amenity than other commonly-used alternatives, including hardscapes and waterscapes.

Typically, it's less expensive to relocate trees than it is to destroy what's already in place and replant new trees. Giant trees, however, need extra consideration when being moved. □

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