

# Ducote's Tree Farm

*Planting trees to last a lifetime all across South Louisiana*



*Ducote's ninety-inch tree spade that can move a 13,000 pound chunk of dirt from around the tree—5 1/2 feet deep and 8 feet across.*



*With more than 20,000 trees and 26 varieties to choose from, there's a perfect match for every yard.*

“We don't let the tree know it got moved.”

And that explains Kurt Ducote, is his company's secret to transplanting even large trees, any time of the year and ensuring that they'll prosper.

“What separates us from everyone else is root pruning,” he continues. “We can make a tree grow twice as fast as a container tree with our technique. Every year we go through every single tree on our tree farm and trim the roots.”

And that's when the horticultural magic kicks in. For each root trimmed, the tree re-sprouts three.

“We end up with thousands of roots producing an extremely dense root ball.”

And all those roots can be moved with the tree, which means that it immediately begins to get lots of nutrients as soon as it's in the ground in its new location. The technique has proven so successful it's the subject of a new study.

“We are working with Dr. Ed Bush at LSU's Burden Research Center to show how the technique works to other nurseries,” says Ducote.

“A cooperative research effort between the LSU AgCenter and Ducote's Nursery has established a seven-year study to determine the benefits of root pruning. Live oak trees will be pruned and harvested over the period to determine the optimum time before harvest and the root density gained each harvest year,” explains Dr. Bush.

But there's yet another secret that Ducote's Nursery brings to bear on its transplant process: A ninety-inch tree spade that can move a 13,000 pound chunk of dirt from around the tree—5 1/2 feet deep and 8 feet across—right along with it.

“When you're moving so much earth the tree does not even know it's in a new spot,” Ducote explains. There's also a smaller

tree spade that's perfect to getting a new tree into a difficult to reach backyard.

But the process of ensuring that a transplanted tree will live a long healthy life starts long before it's moved.

“We grow 26 different varieties altogether,” says Ducote of the more than 20,000 trees growing on their 100-acre tree farm near False River. Each is chosen for its ability to prosper in our local climate and soil, and for longevity.

“When you choose trees in a tree farm you look for those with an 80 to 100 year life span,” Ducote continues adding, “People like to plant trees that will still be around long after they aren't.”

“You can add instant value to your home by adding trees,” he continues. And among those 20,000 choices is a species and size to fit every home and every budget.

“We transplant trees from a 4-inch caliber to a 12-inch caliber,” says Ducote describing what customers can expect from each size. “A 12-inch caliber tree is 30 feet tall by 30 feet wide. My best seller is 6-inches which measures 18 feet tall and 14 feet wide. That's when a tree starts to look like a tree.”

At Ducote's Tree Farm there is a tree that's been grown to be the perfect match for each home, each yard, each customer—The only tree farm in the region that offers a comprehensive one-year guarantee on its transplanted trees.

“I'm known as the guy who sells one tree to one person,” explains Ducote of a reputation that has been carefully earned over nearly two decades. ■

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