



Jim Beggins, above, met Jim McMartin when he sailed with his wife from Long Island, N.Y. to St. Michaels in the winter of 1993.

tive planks cut from the same log. The slow growth of the tree made the wood more dense with unique grains that the two wanted to show off.

“Most people look at it and say ‘Wow, that’s oak?’ ‘It’s just not typical,” Beggins said.

Much of the wood used in the desk came from the upper section of the tree, Beggins added.

“We usually avoid limbs that are going horizontal because you get these weird grain patterns in there,”

he said. “But in the upper section of the Wye Oak — technically, I guess they are limbs — but they were upper sections of the tree that were still very vertical and big. They were as big as normal trees.”

Though McMartin and Beggins work on projects together, they often are not doing the same work.

“We have qualities which are fundamentally complementary to each other,” McMartin said. “We’re both craftsman, of course, but Jim

has more an engineering approach.

“He’s very methodical and organized, and I tend to be the artistic intuitive type. So we have a good balance. We’re not sort of reproducing the same skills and stepping on each other’s toes.”

For an original piece, McMartin typically meets with the customer to find out what they have in mind and the space it is planned for and then does a scale drawing.

The two collaborate on the drawing, balancing form and function, and with approval from the customer, start shaping the wood.

They use some large power tools to start on the boards, but all the joints and finite details are done with hand tools. It’s the way it was done in the federal period, McMartin said, and it brings a uniqueness to the piece.

“That’s the result of benchmade furniture,” he said. “It’s not made with jigs. It’s not made with machines controlling every part and then stuck together. When you make things by hand generally, you’re going to get slight variations. It shows. It’s subtle, but it shows. So that’s sort of our niche.”

In the midst of a project, the pair may find it necessary to tweak the design some.

It’s never a drastic move, Beggins said, only smaller things that come up as the drawing takes shape.

“As we build it, it’s actually open to our own sort of evolution,” Beggins said. “There’s a trust there because they know we’re the folks building in and we’ve done it so many times.”

“If they like the drawing, they’re going to like the real thing is what it comes down to,” McMartin said.

“When in doubt, when we can’t make up our (PAGE 58)

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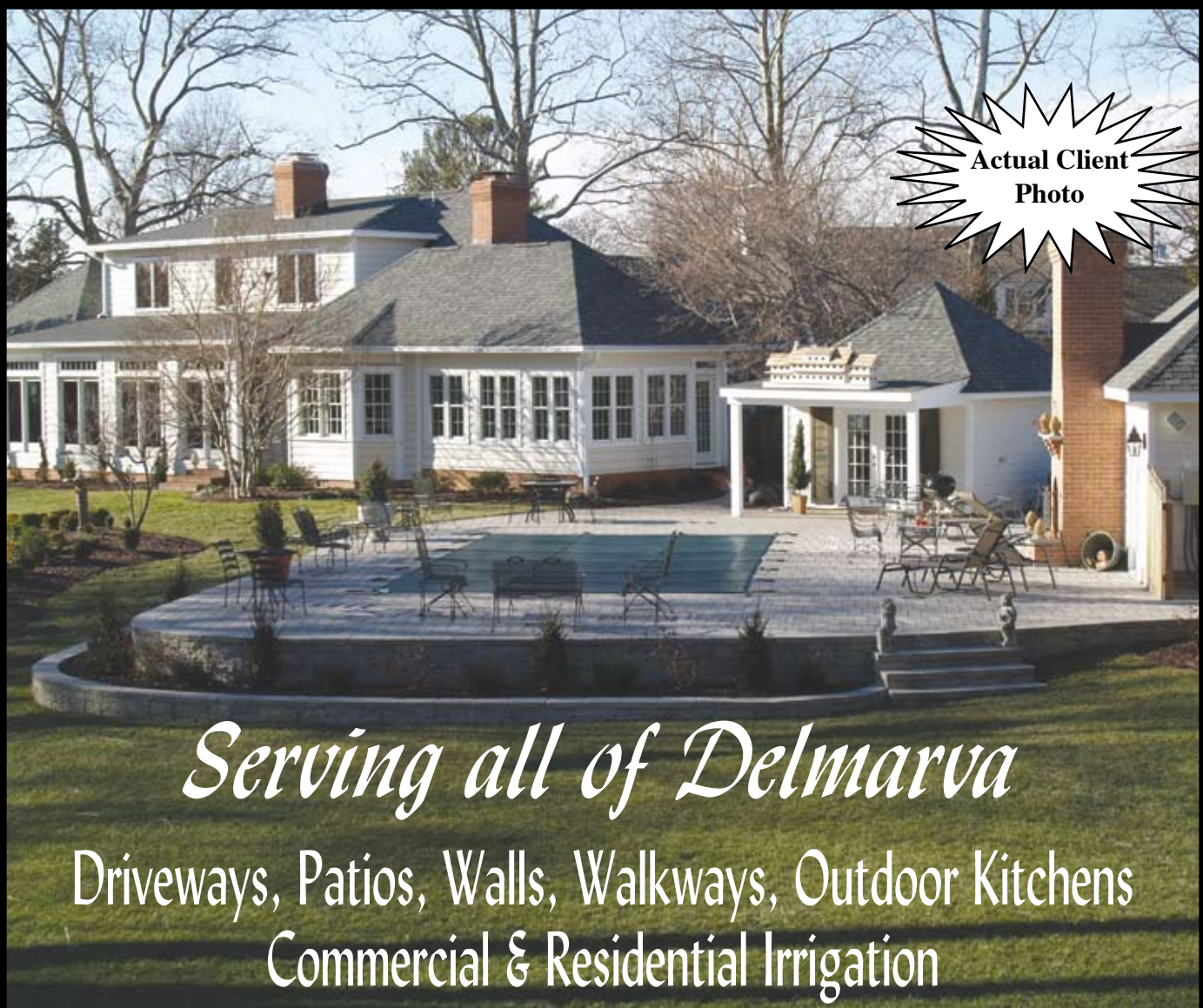
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“One
generation
plants the
trees, and
another
gets the
shade”

—Chinese proverb

‘What kind of tree is right for me?’

Story by Stephanie Jordan

If you're looking to plant a tree, whether it's to beautify your property, to reduce your heating and air conditioning bills or to just be a little "greener," there is a tree for you.

In fact, there may be more than one tree for you.

The only catch — you have to do a bit of research to find the right one.

Mark Eppard, of Bartlett Tree Experts in St. Michaels, says the first thing you should ask yourself when planting a tree is "Why do I want to put a plant here?" Is it for shade? Wildlife attraction? A splash of color? A natural screen for sound and sight?

Keep asking yourself "What would the perfect tree do for me?"

Think about those questions — what you want from the tree and where you want the tree to be planted. For example, if you want to attract more birds to your yard, Norm Brady, also of Bartlett Tree Experts, says you could choose a tree that bears fruit, and place it in the vicinity of a bird feeder. And as an added bonus, you won't have berries rolling all over the sidewalk because the birds will have eaten them.

Two things you should look at before you even think about buying a tree



The pyramidal Norway spruce features a rapid growth rate. It also tolerates open windy conditions and most soil conditions, including alkaline soils.



The Southern Magnolia boasts evergreen foliage and has large, white flowers in summer.

The maple, opposite page, turns yellow to red in the fall and blossoms subtle red flowers in late winter and early spring. It is tolerant of heavy, poorly drained soils and adverse environmental conditions. However, its shallow roots can inhibit grass and heave sidewalks. It has relatively weak wood and is prone to breakage and decay.

is the pH of the soil and drainage.

A tree is “not like you or I,” Brady says. “We get hungry, we go to the grocery store. A tree has to get everything (they need) right there. Work with the soil chemistry, not against it.”

In addition to soil pH and drainage, there are a number of other things to consider when planting a tree, including:

- Debris from the tree;
- Safety — make sure the tree isn't too close to your home or other structures;
- Size potential;
- How long you want the tree to live;
- How much shade you want from the tree;
- How long it will take for the tree to mature;
- Root system — some trees have an invasive root mass and shouldn't be planted close to septic systems;
- How it will reproduce;
- Placement in relation to hardscape;
- Maintenance; and
- Disease prevalence.

Be thorough in your research. Really take the time to find out the true potential for the plant you've chosen — its size, breadth and shade capabilities.

“If you buy a \$10 shrub and make a mistake, it's no big deal,” Epard says. “But if you buy a \$700 tree, it's a large, permanent mistake.”

People tend to force trees in areas they don't belong, and to be shaped unnaturally. A tree could be hundreds of years old, surviving and thriving in its environment, only to die once people come closer, changing its habitat too rapidly for it to keep up.

“As best they can, they'll try



The river birch is best used in moist soils. It has a salmon-white exfoliating bark when young, but it turns dark with age. It tolerates poor drainage and grows rapidly — about 3 to 4 feet per year.

to adapt to” their environment, Epard says. “The problem is people. We change the drainage patterns on them. We change the water table.

We try to change their environment to what we want. It goes back to planning. Get the right tree in the right place.”

Brady adds that a major issue for trees is over pruning.

“Over pruning is definitely an issue,” he says. “You can’t take one-third of the foliage from the tree without it making a significant difference.”

One of the most important things to remember is that there is a bevy of professionals who can answer all your questions and help you determine what tree is best for you and your situation. You can talk to a certified arborist or an arboretum; take a visit to look at the mature tree so you can get a grasp on how it will look and how large it could potentially be.

You can also ask them if the tree is a well-used one, and what, if any, disease issues it has. Talk to your neighbors, too, to see if they have an old tree like the one you’re considering and ask them about their experience with it.

A few final thoughts from Eppard and Brady:

- Just because you plant an evergreen tree doesn’t mean leaves aren’t going to fall.

- You can plant “temporary trees” among your long-term investments so that you have a landscape, but one that will change once the long-term plant gains size.

- The position of trees can help to cool an area, lowering your air conditioning bill, or they can block winds, keeping your heating bill down.

- A lot of people want instant shade, so they trade speed of growth for stability. There are new hybrids that have been bred to have the best of both worlds.

- There is a tree for any environment, you just have to make sure they have what they need (sun, water, space) to grow.

Try these trees on for size on the Mid-Shore

Acer buergerianum **Trident Maple**

Good specimen tree or screen for small landscapes. Brilliant orange-red fall color. Broad spreading crown unless trained for street tree planting. Requires acid, well-drained soils. Tolerates drought.

Acer rubrum **Red Maple**

Native tree for specimen, mass planting and street tree. Yellow to red fall color. Subtle red flowers in late winter, early spring. Tolerant of heavy, poorly drained soils and adverse environmental conditions. Shallow roots can inhibit grass and heave sidewalks. Relatively weak wood; prone to breakage and decay.

Acer saccharum **Sugar Maple**

Specimen tree for large sites, parks. Suitable for street tree where large tree lawns exist. Brilliant fall color and strong wood characteristics. Requires moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates shade when young. Sensitive to salt, compacted soil, limited root space.

Amelanchier spp. **Serviceberry**

Small tree for specimen planting or mass planting along borders of natural areas. Poor street tree. White flowers, edible purple berries, yellow to orange fall color. Tolerates

sun or shade. Needs moist, well-drained soils. Susceptible to many pests.

Betula nigra **River birch**

Specimen tree best used in moist soils. Salmon-white exfoliating bark when young but turns dark with age. Tolerates poor drainage. Grows rapidly (3 to 4 feet per year). Needs acidic soil. Resistant to leaf-miner and borers.

Cedrus atlantica **Atlas Cedar**

Specimen tree or screen. Requires well-drained soil and protection from wind. Tolerates alkaline soils. Sapsuckers frequently cause major injury.

Cladrastris lutea **Yellowwood**


Specimen tree. Broad spreading crown. Steel gray, smooth bark, showy white flowers in mid-spring. Yellow fall color. Tolerates alkaline soils. Need full sun and well-drained soil. Needs pruning when young to avoid weak branching habit.

Cornus mas **Yellow Dogwood Corneliancherry**

Useful for naturalizing, border and mass plantings. Flowers in later winter/early spring. Plant in sun or shade. Adapted to acid or alkaline soils. Tolerant of moist and dry soils. Resistant to anthracnose.

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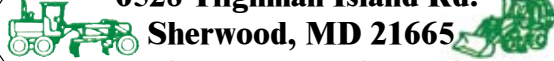
- Diversification is important in any landscape; in case of disease, you want to have different plants so they won’t all die off. Make use of the different potential of different trees.

- If you’re going to try to force a plant to stay in place, there is a trade off — some form of maintenance (and your time, effort and/or money) will be needed. 

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(FROM PAGE 29)

Fagus grandifolia American Beech

Specimen tree. Broad crown. Massive limbs. Smooth gray bark. Requires moist, well-drained, loose acid soils. Does not tolerate site changes or environmental stress. Scale and beech bark disease cause decline north of Philadelphia.

Halesia carolina Silverbell

Use as a specimen tree, border planting or naturalize as an understory plant. Showy, white bell-shaped flowers in early spring. Showy, light brown winged fruit. Requires acid, well-drained, moist soil. Tolerates sun or shade.

Koelreuteria paniculata Goldenrain Tree

Small specimen tree and street tree in residential areas. Showy yellow flowers in summer. Showy, papery fruit (capsules) in autumn. Requires full sun and well-drained soils. Tolerant of alkaline soils. Has weak wood; prone to storm damage.

Lagerstromiea indica Crapemyrtle

Specimen plant, group planting, street tree. Generally multi-stemmed plant, but can be pruned into single stem. Showy flowers in summer. Smooth to exfoliating bark. Tolerant of wide range of soil conditions and environmental stress. Needs full sun. Susceptible to aphids and mildew.

Liquidambar styraciflua Sweetgum

Specimen tree or street tree. Rapid growth. Star-shaped leaves with red fall color. Fruit is considered objectionable by some. Manganese deficiency occurs in alkaline soil. Tolerates poor-drained soils.

Magnolia grandiflora Southern Magnolia

Specimen tree. Glossy, evergreen foliage. Large, white flowers in summer. Needs moist well-drained acid soil, full sun and large growing space.

Malus sp. Crabapple

Small tree for street or specimen planting. Showy flowers (early spring) and fruit (fall). Flower color, form and fruit characteristics depend on cultivar. Tolerates adverse environments and diverse soil conditions. Sensitive to variety of insects, disease pests. Select resistant variety. Hardiness, size depends on variety. (PAGE 44)