Should you plant trees in the winter?

Many arborists would say this is the best time of the year to plant. Trees are in a dormant stage, BUT, most people will not go through all the steps to ensure that the tree will survive. For example: you will need to precondition the ground with a slow release fertilizer and dig a hole that is approximately twice size of the diameter of the root ball. This of course could prove to be a challenge due to the fact that the ground could be frozen. You will also need to mulch around the tree and provide water. If the tree is a broad leaf evergreen, wilt-proofs and anti-desiccants are advised to minimize winter injury.

That said; let’s look at another native tree to plant this spring.

The White Oak

*Quercus alba*, the White Oak, is one of the pre-eminent hardwoods of eastern North America. It is a long-lived oak in the family Fagaceae, native to eastern North America, from southern Quebec west to eastern Minnesota, and south to northern Florida and eastern Texas. Specimens are known to have lived over 600 years. The oldest white oak tree in New Jersey is our very own. It is found at the Presbyterian Church in the center of Basking Ridge.
Although called the White Oak, it is very unusual to find an individual specimen with white bark; the usual color is a light gray. In the forest it reaches a magnificent height. In the open it develops into a massive broad-topped tree with great limbs striking out at wide angles.

The bark is a light ash-gray and somewhat peeling, variously from the top, bottom and/or sides.

This tree has the potential to become a large spreading tree in diameter so it will need plenty of room to thrive. It has a wide variety of growing habitats.

The white oak is the perfect tree to plant as a memorial since it will live for generations.
INVASIVE: do NOT plant!

Russian-Olive

Elaeagnus angustifolia L. Oleaster family (Elaeagnaceae)

Russian-olive is a small, usually thorny shrub or small tree that can grow to 30 feet in height. Its stems, buds, and leaves have a dense covering of silvery to rusty scales. Leaves are egg or lance-shaped, smooth margined, and alternate along the stem. At three years of age, plants begin to flower and fruit. Highly aromatic, creamy yellow flowers appear in June and July and are later replaced by clusters of abundant silvery fruits. BEWARE of this shrub!!

ECOLOGICAL THREAT

This is a difficult species to control! Total removal is your best bet!

The Russian Olive Bush is able to outcompete native vegetation due to its ability to fix nitrogen in its roots. This enables it to establish itself and grow successfully in areas where native trees and shrubs simply cannot survive. Eventually, the Russian Olive Bush will take over the surrounding environment, beating out the native plants in the competition for water and nutrients. Because the Russian Olive Bush doesn't succumb easily to natural controls (e.g. grazing herbivores or insect damage), most sources I have researched suggest mowing down the bushes with a brush mower and then digging out the roots. This should be done in the early spring, when wet soil makes it easier to remove the roots completely. It's important to dig out all of the roots, because trying to control these bushes by burning or mowing alone will just result in the roots sending up dozens of more sprouts. Chemical controls like Roundup can be applied to cut stumps, but they will only be temporarily effective if the roots are not completely removed.