Springtime means planting Trees ~

It looks like we are finally done with the snow! Now is the time to get your yard in shape. Think about planting some trees!

The American Hornbeam is a wonderful addition to small yards and is also perfect for a natural landscape or as a specimen tree. Trees not only add dimension to your landscaping but they add value to your property.

Our second tree the Common Hackberry is also a nice addition to your yard. It is a great food source for so many different types of birds.

American Hornbeam

*Carpinus caroliniana* ~
The Hornbeam generally is 20 to 40 feet tall and 20 to 30 feet wide. It has a slow growth rate of about 1 foot per year. It has green catkin flowers and blooms from April until June.

This is fine-textured tree that is related to the birches. The smooth, gray, muscular-looking bark of American hornbeam is attractive year-round. The tree’s look is enhanced by its crooked trunk and pendulous, zig-zagging branches, which help attract wildlife. Finches, ruffed grouse and wild turkeys eat American hornbeam nutlets. The trunk and branches of this tree have ridges that look like muscles. The American hornbeam is a wonderful addition to a natural landscape. It will tolerate flooding. Songbirds are attracted to its forked branches, dense crown and tasty seeds. Its fall foliage can be beautiful.

American hornbeam tolerates wet sites. It does well in shade, and will perform admirably in full sun, where it becomes more dense and uniform with the proper amount of moisture. It will withstand flooding, and is more tolerant of heat.

This tree is basically disease and insect-free.
This tree is great for *Erosion control*! The Common hackberry is included in windbreak plantings to control wind erosion. Additionally, its deep root system makes common hackberry useful for preventing soil erosion on disturbed sites.

It is interesting to know that Native Americans valued common hackberry for medicinal, food, and ceremonial purposes. Medicinally, the bark was decocted to serve as a gynecological aid that could induce abortion, regulate menstrual cycles, and treat venereal diseases. Bark decoctions were also taken for sore throats.

The drupes of common hackberry were mixed with fat and corn to form porridge or crushed to add flavor to foods. They were also pounded into a paste, molded onto a stick and baked over an open fire. Common hackberry was used as the fuel source for the altar fire at peyote ceremonies, prayer ceremonies that utilized the hallucinogenic peyote cactus. At the beginning of each of the four stages of the ceremony, the altar fire was replenished with common hackberry wood.

Although the features of common hackberry are not considered attractive, it is commonly used as a street tree because of its ability to withstand
drought and tolerate urban environments. Common hackberry is also a bonsai species.

The wild turkey, ring-necked pheasant, quail, grouse, lesser prairie chicken, cedar waxwing, robins, and other bird species consume common hackberry fruit, which persist throughout the winter. Small mammals also consume the fruit. Deer will browse common hackberry leaves in the absence of preferred browse species. Common hackberry provides good cover for species such as mule deer, white-tailed deer, upland game birds, small non-game birds, and small mammals.

Common hackberry is a large deciduous tree reaching 12 m to 18 m in height at maturity. It typically lives to be 150 to 200 years old and exhibits its greatest annual growth between 20 and 40 years of age. The bark is grayish and warty, and stems have a zigzag appearance.
It was loved for gracing "hallowed halls" back in its day, but English ivy has become a major invasive villain! It is considered INVASIVE from New York to Georgia.
Given a foothold, English ivy will suppress and exclude other vegetation to form a dense monoculture groundcover that is unsuitable for wildlife habitat.

As a vine, it can completely engulf shrubs and encircles tree trunks of all sizes, leaving nothing uncovered. Shrubs shrouded in ivy may eventually die because light can't reach their leaves. The sheer weight of the extra vegetation also weakens the plant it grows on, making it more susceptible to disease. Trees usually survive ivy invasion, even though weakened by retaining a "broccoli head" of foliage at the very top.

The only real safe place for the English Ivy is in topiaries and hanging baskets."

Like many plants that are widely used for horticulture, the characteristics that originally made English ivy popular as an ornamental garden plant are the ones that make it invasive given a too-friendly environment. It grows rapidly, is a hardy, woody, evergreen perennial and needs very little light or water once it's established. It spreads rapidly as a groundcover and also climbs as a vine.

Once it gains a few feet of height, by climbing trees, shrubs, mailboxes, fences or anything available, it begins to produce rounded leaves without lobes, which are distinctly different from the familiar three-lobed ivy leaf. Then small greenish flowers appear followed by clusters of black berries, eaten and spread by birds.
If you've inherited a problem crop of English ivy, you can crop it diligently to keep it from spreading or blooming.

If you have just groundcover, you may be able to pull it up by hand. If you have a large vine and cut the trunk, the upper plant will wither and die. Once it's dead and somewhat dried out, you can pull it off its base more easily.

Because English ivy is evergreen and grows even during the winter, you can apply systemic herbicides like *triclopyr* and *glyphosate* any time of year as long as the temperature is above approximately 60 degrees. English ivy has a very waxy leaf surface; this means that the most effective herbicides might be those mixed with a surfactant to help dissolve the wax. The plants should show dieback within a week during warm weather or a few weeks when it's cool. You will most likely need to repeat applications for a dense mat. English Ivy is capable of destroying even masonry!
This is what worked for me, go over it with a weed-whacker and chop up the leaves in order to encourage new growth. You don’t need to shave it to the ground. Just tear it up a bit and in a couple of weeks the new growth will start, you will see light, bright green foliage. The new growth does not have this protective wax coating yet so this is the time to spray with an herbicide. The herbicide will be taken in through the new leaves and kill the plant. It may take a few rounds of doing this! Try to do this in dry weather; a well watered plant is not nearly as likely to die as one that is weakened by lack of water. Spring or summer is the best time.

Depending on the size of the area you are working on, pulling the vines up is the best. I usually wait a week until I am sure the herbicide has taken hold. If you pull up a lot of vines, roll into piles and let dry out before disposing of them. Just remember a ¼” of an English Ivy plant can sprout up and the whole thing will start again.

For an herbicide I found Ortho Brush-B-Gone to be the most effective.

Good Luck!