

The care and keeping of your oak tree

How to plant your oak sapling

- Make sure there is plenty of sunlight, but not direct light
- Check overhead for other trees, power lines or overhangs – your tree will eventually grow very large
- Try to keep a 30-foot radius around your tree free of other large plants
- Avoid weedy areas
- Keep your tree watered regularly, once a week for hot climates and once every week and a half for cooler climates
- You can use fertilizer, but remember to be sparing as it can disrupt the water system

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Arts and Entertainment Editor

The tradition of giving an oak sapling to a graduating Elon University senior started in 1991. The first trees were redwoods, brought by commencement speaker and alumnus Furman Moseley, a California tree farmer. The following year, the oak trees were brought in.

The trees mark a cycle that begins freshman year, when new students are given acorns at New Student Convocation. The sapling represents the growth the student has undergone in four years and that they will always take Elon with them.

It's hard to know what to do with a tree when you live in an apartment right out of college. Here are a few tips for what to do with your sapling.

1. Plant it in a public park.

Before you move away from home, go to one of your favorite childhood parks or lakes and find a nice spot for your tree. Is there a park where you took prom pictures or discovered photography? Plant the tree there. You run the risk, of course, of park maintenance coming along and killing your tree. But if it survives, you have a permanent reminder of where you came from and where you'll be going.

2. Plant it in your parents' backyard.

If your parents don't plan on moving after you graduate or in the near future, spend time with them over the summer planting your tree. It will be a nice reminder that the education they paid for worked out for you. Also, every time you visit home

your tree will have grown in a much more visible way than if you kept it by your side every day.

3. Keep it as a house plant.

Not many people can say they have a hardwood tree as a houseplant. As long as you have a pot big enough for the tree to grow in, the tree should be fine for a few years before you get to a permanent residence. Many alumni have lamented the death of their saplings before they had a chance to plant them in a permanent space.

Your tree will remain alive and well as long as you give it plenty of space to grow, sunlight and water. A five-gallon pot purchased at a home and garden store will give it plenty of space. Line the bottom with pebbles for drainage and gently remove your tree from its original wrapping. Take extra care

not to damage the roots, because then your tree will die.

After placing the tree in its new home, fill around the edges with loose potting soil and keep your tree outside or near a large window. Make sure to water extensively weekly if you live in a hot or dry climate. If you keep your plant inside or live in a cooler climate, water once every week and a half.

If you find you have a black thumb and can't keep your tree alive, call Elon's landscaping department and you will be provided with a replacement.

Once you have established a home for your sapling, continue to make it feel loved. You can name it or decorate it for the holidays. Give it a sparkler to hold on July 4 or document its growth throughout the years. Regardless of what you do with your tree, it will always be a reminder of your time at Elon, under the oaks.

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