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Planting a Tree

Trees that are in containers or balled and burlapped can be planted in spring as soon as the ground has thawed through fall freeze up. Bare root trees must be planted in spring while dormant.

Take care of your tree and be gentle with it in transport, remember that it is a living thing! Protect it from wind and insure that the roots are kept moist at all times, drying out for even a short period of time can be fatal. Plant it as soon as possible.

Digging the hole and placing the tree – Bare root and potted trees

Determine where the root collar is located on the tree, (the place where the trunk tissue meets the root tissue).

Next dig a hole 6” deeper than the distance from the collar to the bottom of the pot or the base of the root zone and a minimum of 1.5’ wider than the root system or pot. Add debris free material to bottom of hole that was removed during excavation and tamp lightly.

Place tree in hole and insure that tree collar is level or 1”-2” above existing grade. Remove the pot, if present, taking care not to disturb the root system. For potted trees cut off any damaged roots and unravel any spiral roots to prevent future girdling. For bare root trees prune off any dried or damaged roots. Lay roots out in planting hole. Blend existing soil, (with rocks and debris removed), with compost to create a 70/30 mix. After backfilling firmly tamp soil to prevent settling.

Water thoroughly to eliminate air pockets.

Digging the hole and placing the tree – Balled and burlapped Trees

Determine where the root collar is located on the tree within the root ball.

Dig a hole 2 – 3 times as wide but no deeper than the root ball. To determine the proper planting depth, measure the distance from the bottom of the root ball to the root collar.

Before placing the tree in the hole remove all tags, ribbons, etc. When moving the tree, do not drag or lift the tree by the trunk, only by the ball..

Gently guide the tree into the planting hole. Remove twine, clip and fold back wire basket and trim back burlap as far as possible. If left on, this material can girdle the tree.

Carefully remove soil from the top of the root ball to expose the root collar. Check again to make sure the collar is level or 1"-2" above the existing grade. Planting too deep can kill the tree.

Make sure the tree is straight before backfilling. Blend existing soil with compost, tamp and backfill as mentioned above.

Celebrate a job well done... a properly planted tree.

Caring for your tree

Fertilizing - Apply a slow release fertilizer prior to mulching to insure that the fertilizer reaches the soil. Keep fertilizer at least 6" away from trunk. Do not fertilize from mid September to mid October. This would encourage new growth which could then freeze off.

Watering – Water as needed throughout the season, about 1" per week. This is approximately 1 1/2-2 hours using a sprinkler or with a hose placed at the tree's base at a slow trickle. Remember to take into account any rainfall which may occur.

Mulching – To properly mulch, apply 3"- 4" of aged wood chips, shredded bark or a similar material around the root zone. Make sure the mulch is pulled back 3"- 4" away from the trunk.

Staking – Most trees do not require staking. If necessary, use wide webbing material. Attach material to tree and stakes allowing for slight movement in the wind. This strengthens the trunk and stimulates growth.

Pruning – Less is better in the case of newly installed trees. These trees need all the leaves possible. Remove only broken, diseased or rubbing branches