



Planning and Zoning Department
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Recommended Tree Planting Instructions

Proper planting is critical to the survival and success of your young tree.

Planting Your Tree

If you can, plant your tree as soon as you get it home. If you can't plant it immediately, store it in a shaded place, give it some water, and plant within the next 2-3 days. Do NOT let the roots dry out!

Remember: When handling your tree...

- 1) Trees in containers, knit bags or balled in burlap, should be lifted by the container or root ball, never by the trunk.
- 2) Always set your tree down gently. Dropping a tree's root ball onto the ground can result in serious damage to the roots.



Step 1: Dig a hole...

- The hole should be at **least twice as wide as the tree's root ball** in order to properly set the tree in place – wider is better. The hole should only be **as deep as the tree's root ball (see below).**
- Mark the center of the hole, and remove sod from an area twice the size of the root ball – set sod aside for use later
- Remove soil to the proper depth – setting it aside (separate from the sod for reuse when planting

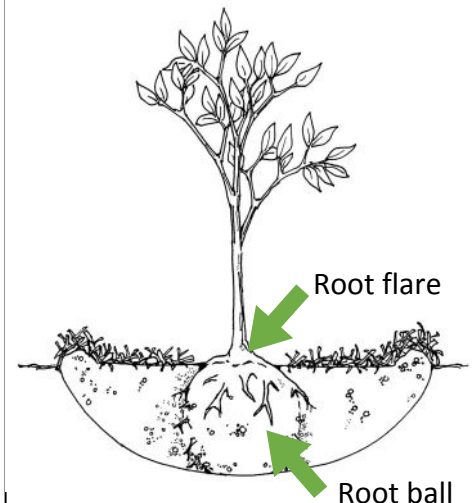
Getting the Depth Right

Planting a tree at the right depth is critical for its health and survival. Many trees are planted too low, preventing their roots from receiving adequate oxygen.

To plant your tree at the right depth...

Find the trunk flare – the area of the trunk that flares out to meet the topmost roots. Note that you may need to gently remove soil on the top of the root ball to expose the trunk flare.

Make sure that the trunk flare sits above ground when the hole is filled with soil - use your shovel handle to measure the depth of the root ball below the root flare and make sure the hole is no deeper than depth of the root ball.



Step 2: Remove all twine and tags from the tree's branches. – It's easier to do this before the tree is planted and leaving them on the tree can damage small branches.

Step 3: Place tree in the ground:

This step will vary depending on how your tree was grown in the field and provided to you. Most likely, your tree will either be planted in a plastic container, or balled in burlap fabric. Please see the appropriate section below:

For Container-grown Trees:

- Carefully lay tree on the ground.
- While firmly holding the tree trunk, pull the container off the root ball. **Do not** pull on trunk, it can damage the roots.
 - If container doesn't slide off easily, you may need to trim off any roots that are caught in the holes at the bottom of the container or cut the container open with a box knife.
- Once tree is out of container, check for circling roots
 - Container grown trees often become "root-bound" and sometimes have large roots circling the edge of the root ball – these can continue to grow in a circle once planted and choke out other good roots.
 - If you spot a large circling root, use a utility knife or pruners cut a few inches off the end of the offending root to help get it growing in a better direction
 - If you have a mass of thick small roots around the entire outside of the container, run a utility knife down the side of the root ball in 4 or 5 locations to break up the mass.
- Carefully set root ball into the hole, remembering not to lift the tree up by the trunk. If too heavy to lift, you may choose to lay it on its side and gently roll it into the hole.

For balled and burlapped trees:

Step 4: Gently place your tree in the center of the hole. – do not lift the tree up by the trunk to place tree in the hole, rather lay it on its side and carefully roll it in.

Step 5: Make sure tree is positioned so the trunk is straight up and down – you can make adjustments to correct any leaning by tipping the tree to the opposite side and adding a little soil under the root ball to adjust its resting place.

Step 6: Backfill, and water

- Fill the hole half way with soil.
- Add water to settle the soil, filling the hole to the top.
- Fill the hole with the rest of the soil after the water has seeped in

- Build a soil berm circling the base of the tree to capture and hold water. You can use the grass you set aside earlier to help with this – simply flip the grass upside down in a ring around the tree. Tamp and press soil gently with hands (not feet!).
- Water thoroughly, filling the basin you’ve created.

Step 7: Mulch

- After the water has soaked in, cover the soil and berm with 3 inches of wood mulch to maintain moisture and prevent erosion and weed growth. Keep mulch 4 inches away from trunk.

Step 8: Enjoy your new Tree!

