



TREE INSTALLATION

Think of the tree you just purchased as a lifetime investment. How well your tree, and investment, grows depends on the care you provide during and after planting.

If your tree is balled and burlapped it is important to understand that its root system has been reduced by 90 % when it was dug. As a result of the trauma trees commonly exhibit what is known as transplant shock. Containerized trees may also experience transplant shock when planted. Transplant shock is indicated by slow growth and reduced vigor following planting. Proper site preparation and good follow up care reduces the amount of time the plant experiences transplant shock and allows the tree to quickly establish in its new location. Carefully follow these simple steps:

1. Proper handling during planting is essential to ensure a healthy future for new trees and shrubs. When handling your balled and burlapped tree, always support the bottom of the root ball. Never pick up the tree by the trunk in either balled or burlapped or containerized trees or shrubs. Never drop it on the ground. Shattering the root ball is very detrimental to your tree. If the tree is too heavy consider having it planted, or enlist the help of a friend.
2. Dig a shallow, broad planting hole. Make the hole wide, at least two times the diameter of the root ball but only as deep as the root ball. It is important to make the hole wide because the roots on the new tree must push through the surrounding soil in order to establish. Breaking up the soil around the hole also provides aid in helping the emerging roots to expand. If the soil is heavy clay remove the hard pan pieces and discard them. Good topsoil should be set aside to be used in the backfill. The depth of the hole should be level with the top of the root ball or 2"-3" higher to allow for settling.
3. Identify the trunk flare. The trunk flare is where the trunk spreads at the base of the tree. This point should be partially visible after the tree is planted.
4. If you are planting a containerized tree remove the container by carefully cutting down the sides of the container. Inspect the root ball for circling roots and cut or remove them. Expose the trunk flare, if necessary.
5. Place the tree at the proper height. Before placing the tree in the hole, check to see if the hole is at the proper depth. The majority of the roots on the newly planted tree will develop in the top 12 inches of soil. If the tree is planted too deeply, new roots will have difficulty developing because of lack of oxygen. It is better to

- plant 2-3 inches high above the trunk flare to allow for some settling. To avoid damage when settling the tree in the hole, always lift the tree by the root ball and not the trunk.
6. Straighten the tree in the hole. Before backfilling, view the tree from several directions to confirm that the tree is straight.
 7. Fill the hole gently but firmly. Backfill should consist of some of the original soil mixed with composted manure, peat moss, or good organic topsoil. A 1:1 ratio of original to organic matter is a good mixture. Fill the hole about one-third full and gently but firmly pack around the base of the root ball. Then cut the twine and pull back the burlap from the root ball. Remove any fabric, plastic, string, and pull back the wire handles from the root ball down into the hole. Continue to backfill, a few inches at a time. Remember to press gently but firmly as you backfill, this ensures that no air pockets are left which will allow the roots to dry out. Continue to backfill to the top of the soil line of the tree as it was in the nursery where it was grown. When backfilling is done, a “dish” should be made around the topsoil line of the tree with your backfill material. This area should encircle the flat area of the ball. The dirt dam should follow the outside edge of the root ball.
 8. Staking for support is not necessary in most home landscape situations. However protective staking may be required where lawn mower damage, vandalism, or windy conditions are concerns.
 9. Mulch the base of the tree. Mulch acts as a blanket to hold moisture, moderate soil temperatures, and reduces competition from grass and weeds. A 2-4 inch layer of mulch is ideal. More than 4 inches may cause problems with oxygen and moisture. When placing the mulch be sure that the actual trunk of the tree is not covered. Doing so may cause decay of the bark. A mulch free area 1-2 inches at the base of the tree is sufficient.
 10. Provide follow up care: Keep the soil moist but not soaked: Over-watering causes leaves to turn yellow and fall off. Water trees at least 1-2 times a week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather. When the soil is dry below the surface of the mulch, it is time to water. Deep soakings are much better than frequent shallow watering. The best way to know if your tree needs watering is to dig down into the soil surrounding the tree and feeling with your hand check to see if the soil is moist or not.
 11. A starter fertilizer should be used when planting your tree with a repeat application in one week, and one month. Additional fertilization should not be applied for a one year period.

If you have any questions regarding planting or follow up care please feel free to call us at Allied Nursery, (815) 722-2280.