

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will my irrigation system water my tree enough?

No. Most irrigation systems are meant to water turf, not trees. The amount of water distributed does not penetrate the soil deep enough to water the root ball. Frequent, shallow waterings encourage surface rooting, which makes the tree more vulnerable to drying out in periods of drought. Infrequent, deep soakings encourage the production of a deep root system and more drought tolerant trees. Continue to water your tree into late fall just prior to the soil freezing.

Do I have to mulch my tree? What is mulch?

Mulch has many benefits such as reducing moisture evaporation, buffering extremes in temperature change, minimizing weed competition (and thus water use), and protecting the trunk from lawn equipment damage. Rock, as mulch, is not effective at holding in moisture nor can it keep the roots cool in hot weather. Wood mulch, which also enriches the soil, works the best.

When should I fertilize my tree?

Nitrogen deficiencies are most common in sandy soils, especially where irrigation is heavy. The result is reduced growth (less than 6" shoot growth), smaller leaves, or yellowing of leaves. No need to fertilize if your tree is healthy, especially if it receives nutrients from mowed grass clippings.

Should I stake my newly planted tree?

Only stake your tree if it is weakened in any way or it is in direct line of strong winds. Most newly planted trees do better without staking – they will develop stronger, more resilient trunks. Trunk movement is required to encourage strong, tapered trunks.

What about tree wraps?

In fall, wrap young, thin-barked trees with commercial tree wrap from the bottom up to the first major branch. Do not use a black-colored tree wrap. Maples and Honeylocusts may require protection for several years. Always remove the wrap in spring.



Care Guide For Your New Trees & Shrubs



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PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

We recommend amending your soil with compost and/or peat moss. In heavy, compact (clay) soil blend at a rate of about 2/3 native soil and 1/3 compost. In sandy soils blend at a rate of 1/3 native, 1/3 compost and 1/3 peat moss. This is your backfill mixture. **More is not better!** Too much soil amendment can create a "false environment" and cause roots to be confined to the planting hole, also known as "girdling."

Potted Trees & Shrubs:

1. Dig the hole at least 1-2 feet wider than the size of the container. Remove container off of the tree.
2. Score the root ball vertically – just deep enough to cut the net of roots. Also, make a criss-cross cut across the bottom. **Hint:** *The tighter the root ball, the more the root system should be disturbed.*
3. Planting depth is determined by soil type. In **heavy, clay** soil the root flair should be about 3" above the soil grade. In **sandier** soil, place the root flair even with soil grade.
4. Set the tree in the hole. Water during and after backfilling to eliminate air pockets.
5. Mulch the tree at a depth of 3-4 inches. **Hint:** *Keep mulch 3" away from tree trunk (looks like a donut).*

Root flair should be visible when completely done.

Balled & Burlap Trees:

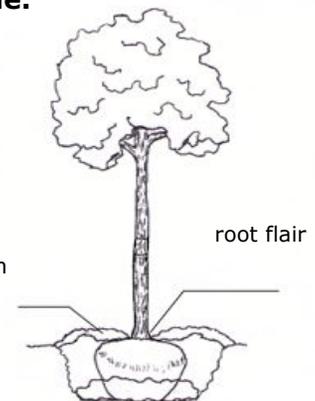
1. Measure the largest diameter of the root ball. Dig the hole 1-2 feet wider than that size.
2. Measure the depth of the root ball, beginning at the root flair to the bottom of the ball. In **heavy, clay** soil put some backfill in the hole so that about one-fourth of the root ball is above soil grade. In **sandier** soil, the top of the root ball should be even with soil grade.
3. Place the tree in the hole. Extra care should be given not to loosen or break the soil ball.

4. We recommend leaving the cage and burlap intact.
5. Backfill hole until soil reaches root flair. Water several times during backfilling to eliminate air pockets.
6. Mulch tree at a depth of 3-4 inches. **Hint:** *Keep mulch 3" away from tree trunk (looks like a donut).*
7. When finished, your tree should have a mounded appearance (more pronounced in heavy soils).

**Root flair should be visible when done.
Adjust height according to soil type.**

WATERING

1. Water your tree with a garden hose running at a very slow trickle. Place the hose over the planting hole, at least 12" away from the trunk. **Hint:** *There should be no water runoff.*
2. Water large-container trees and B&B trees for 45 minutes to an hour. Shrubs and smaller container trees need about fifteen to thirty minutes, respectively.
3. Water this way 2-3 times per week in sandy soil, and 1-2 times per week in heavier soil. **Hint:** *Examine soil moisture 4-8" deep. Water if it feels dry or just slightly damp. Additional watering may be required in extreme heat. Always check moisture first!*



FERTILIZING

1. Do not fertilize your newly planted tree or shrub. By adding soil amendments, such as compost or peat, you are providing beneficial nutrients for root establishment.
2. You can fertilize the following year, and every 2-3 years thereafter in the fall after the leaves have fallen, or in early spring before growth begins. **Hint:** *Do not apply in late summer as this can promote new growth that may not harden off prior to winter.*