

## **How to Plant a Tree**

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Since trees are a significant investment, we should do everything possible to make our planting efforts successful. Before planting, make sure the site is appropriate for the species selected.

Trees will come either as barerooted, balled-and-burlapped, container-grown, or containerized. Plant barerooted trees in the late fall, winter, or early spring when dormant. Do not buy a barerooted tree if it shows more than 2 or 3 inches of new growth. Balled-and-burlapped, container-grown, or containerized trees can be planted anytime the ground is not frozen, except very hot weather. If possible trees should be planted as soon as you get them. Wet soils reduce plant health and survival, so plant trees in a well-drained soil.

The hole for your tree should be at least three to five times as big as the diameter of the root spread or root ball. The top of the root ball should be level with or slightly above level with the surface of the ground. Remove any tags, wires, ropes, strings, etc. from the tree to avoid these strangling and killing the tree. For container grown trees, cut any circling roots. Place balled-and-burlapped trees in the hole and then pull the burlap down off the root ball and leave it in the bottom of the hole. Any diseased or damaged roots should be removed. Untangle and spread the roots to a natural position.

When filling the whole around the tree, use the original soil. If it is too rocky, use topsoil rather than peat moss or compost. When the hole is about three fourths refilled, straighten and level the tree, carefully tamp down the soil, and water heavily. Fill the hole up to its original level and use the excess soil to build a berm or ring 6 to 10 inches from the outside edge of the hole. Water heavily again to fill air pockets in the soil.

After the tree is planted it is critical that it be watered during dry periods of the first growing season. Usually watering deep once per week during dry periods is enough. Slowly soak the soil and allow the water to reach the top of the berm built around the tree. This will provide deep penetration and encourage widespread root development.

Trees should only be staked if necessary, such as those that are top heavy or in an exposed area and stakes should be removed after one growing season.