



Successful Tree & Shrub Planting

Planting

Dig a hole at least twice as wide as the root ball or container.

For Ball & Burlap plants: Carefully place the root ball in the prepared hole. Remove all roping and cut and remove at least the upper 1/3 of the burlap and wire basket (if present).

For plants in containers: Carefully remove the plant from its container. It is often easier to lay the container on its side, grip the plant's trunk, and gently pull the plant while holding onto the container until it releases. Check the plant's roots to see if they're circling and wrapped around themselves excessively. If they appear to be, gently loosen them without busting up the root ball. Place the plant in the prepared hole.

Check the root flare (where the topmost root emerges from the trunk) and make sure it is at or slightly above the soil level. Mix any soil amendments with the soil from the hole and use it to backfill. Tamp the soil around the root ball, and water thoroughly.

Watering

Proper watering is the key to a successful planting. Too much or too little can result in the plant's death. Newly planted trees and shrubs may need to be on a watering schedule for the first 2-3 years until they become established. The root ball of a tree may dry out even if the surrounding soil remains moist.

Water by letting a hose drip slowly at the base of the tree, but not against the trunk. It is not practical to give a formula on how often to water because of varying site and weather conditions. Keep in mind that the upper 8-12 inches of soil should be kept moderately moist. Do not wait until your plants show signs of stress to water them. Probe your soil around the drip line and check moisture levels every 3-4 days.

Mulching

Mulching your plants is both decorative and beneficial. Not only does mulch keep weeds down and make your landscape look complete, but it also protects your new plants. Mulch helps keep your plants' root zone moist and cool during the hot and dry months of summer, as well as providing providing insulation in the cold of winter. Mulch also provides a favorable environment for earthworms and micro organisms to improve soil structure.

Remember when applying the mulch to keep it 4-6 inches away from the trunks of trees and the base of shrubs. Mulch built up against the bark of woody plants can cause moisture build-up and result in rot, insect, or disease infestations. The newly applied mulch should extend about 4-5 feet around the plant.

Fertilizing

First season: When planting a new tree or shrub, **do not** add any fertilizer. The tender root system of your new specimen will need to re-establish itself first. However, compost, or another soil amendment may be added during planting.

Second season: Due to unpredictable late winter/early spring weather, we strongly recommend to wait until the 3rd week in May to apply fertilizer. Organic fertilizers, which break down more slowly, can be applied in early April.