

Tree Planting

Proper tree planting helps ensure young tree survival. Fall is the best planting season. The soil moisture and temperature are generally favorable. Plants will lose less water due to shorter days and cooler temperatures. Roots have more time to develop before warm summer temperatures arrive.

Prior to planting, evaluate the site. Identify soil conditions that may limit root development, such as surface compaction or hardpan. If compaction exists, till the soil until it is loose.

Preparing the hole is very important. Be aware of the location of underground utilities and pipes before digging.

The hole should be at least twice the diameter of the root ball and as deep as the root ball. Plant "high" in all but sandy soils, so the top of the root ball is 1-2 inches above the grade. Roughen the sides of the hole with a shovel to aid easier root penetration.

First, remove the tree from the container and cut or shorten matted and circling roots on outside of the root ball.

Next, place the tree into the hole on firm soil to avoid settling. Face the crook of the grafted union away from the afternoon sun to reduce sunburn. Once the tree is placed, backfill with the original soil. Do not add a planter mix or other soil amendment including fertilizer. Press the soil firmly around the root ball, but do not compact. Do not put fill soil on tip of the root ball.

Lastly, water thoroughly immediately. Pay attention to wetting the container soil and the surrounding soil. Mulch the planted area with mulch to retain moisture and control weeds. But do not pile the mulch against the trunk. Continue to irrigate throughout the winter especially if the winter is dry.