

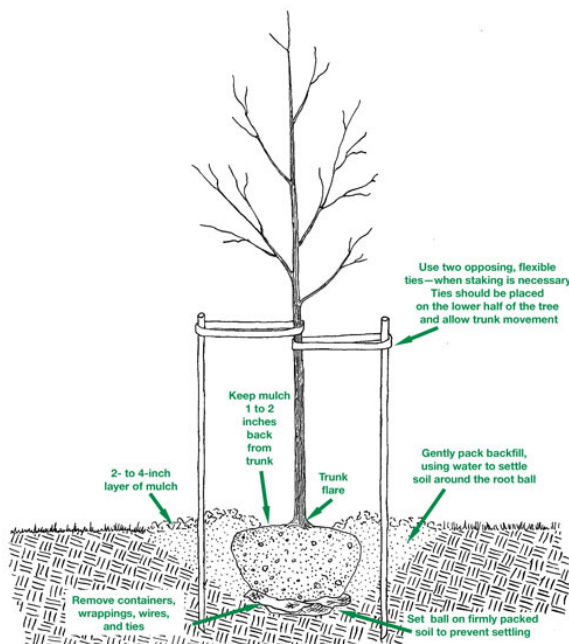


## A Guide to Successful Tree Planting

For more than three decades, the TREE Fund has supported researchers who have tested and refined tree planting techniques to maximize tree health, so that you will have a tree to enjoy for many years to come. We have supported the work of many notable scientists such as Drs. Bonnie Appleton and Susan Day of Virginia Tech and Dr. Ed Gilman of the University of Florida, among others.

These simple guidelines represent the condensed version of many research projects supported by the TREE Fund and its donors. The illustration below was provided courtesy of the International Society of Arboriculture.

1. First of all, pick a suitable location by imagining the mature height and breadth of the tree so you can avoid future interference with utility lines or structures. Assuming that the site has reasonably good soil, dig the hole two to three times the diameter of the container to insure there is soil that is weed and grass free for the roots to grow into (grass is a serious competitor for water and soil nutrients). If the soil is extremely compacted or very low in organic material, replace or amend the soil well beyond the potential rootball.



2. When you pull the tree and soil ball out of the container, check to see if the tree was planted at the correct depth in the container by removing surface soil until you see where the roots flare out from the trunk. This is called the root collar and it should be level or just slightly above the ground once the tree is planted. You may have to adjust the depth of your hole to make sure the root collar, or trunk flare, is at grade.

3. If there are roots circling around the soil ball, either pull them free and straighten them out or cut them off.

Otherwise, as the trunk and circling roots grow larger, the roots will girdle the trunk and kill the tree.

4. Return the soil to the hole and tamp it down to prevent air pockets. Don't add any amendments to the soil (peat moss, fertilizer, compost, etc.), except in the circumstances noted in #1. Mulch the entire area of the hole with two to four inches of composted mulch, and maintain the area weed free and mulch

- covered for at least three years. Be careful not to mound the mulch up against the tree's stem. It should be kept a couple inches from the trunk.
5. Water the tree immediately and regularly during the first year, in fact, every day if it's a dry spell. They were watered daily in the nursery and the soil ball will dry out very fast until new roots grow into the surrounding soil.
  6. Wait until the second growing season if you want to fertilize the tree. Use a slow release nitrogen fertilizer and apply it lightly to the surface of the mulch.

Following these simple rules will give your tree the best chance for quick establishment, fast growth, and a long life. Remember, we plant trees for the next generation because we are now enjoying trees that previous generations have planted for us.



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