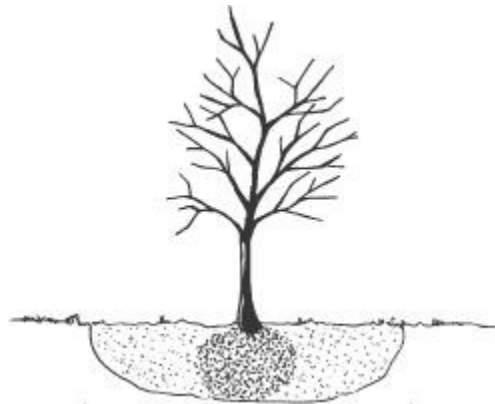


How to Plant a Tree

1. Choose a location where the tree will be able to grow to maturity. Make sure that you are aware of the final size of the tree, as well as how much light, space, and water it requires.
2. Dig a hole that is two to three times the diameter of the rootball. Do not dig the hole any deeper than the tree was planted at the nursery.
3. Remove packing material from around the rootball. If the packing material will not rot, or if you are not sure, remove it.
4. Place the tree in the hole. Take care to not hold it by its trunk.
5. Spread the roots out in the hole.
6. Place topsoil around the roots until the hole is half full. Water thoroughly. This is done to avoid air pockets around the roots.
7. Fill in the rest of the hole with topsoil and water thoroughly.



Dig the hole 2-3 times wider than root ball, but no deeper

Photo taken from <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu>

Keys to Maintaining Healthy Trees

Watering:

Watering is the single most important thing you can do for a newly transplanted tree. Trees and shrubs require one to two inches of water a week, whether in the form of rain or irrigation. This is especially important for the first three years after transplanting a tree while it is becoming fully established.

When watering, apply water to the soil around the roots and allow the soil to dry between watering cycles. Avoid frequent, light watering because this can lead to a shallow root system which can cause the tree to be prone to drought injury. Instead, try to soak the soil every seven to ten days during dry periods. Although we think of irrigation as a summer chore, it may also be necessary during dry winters, especially for evergreens such as pine or rhododendron.

To measure the amount of water that you have applied to your tree, use a rain gauge. If you do not have a rain gauge, place a can with increments of quarter inches marked inside it in the path of the water flow. Measure the amount of water collected in a given time period. Water should be applied at a rate of half an inch per hour. Any more than this and you will lose some water to runoff. If your soil is heavy with clay, you may need to irrigate at a slower rate so that the water has a chance to percolate through the soil correctly.

Mulch:

Mulch can help control weeds and conserve soil moisture. Apply a layer of mulch three inches deep around the base of the tree, being careful to not allow the mulch to make contact with the bark on the trunk. Bark, wood chips, or stone make ideal mulch, however black plastic should be avoided around trees because it may reduce the amount of oxygen getting to the roots.

Fertilize:

Newly planted trees do not have to be fertilized, although some believe adding a root stimulating fertilizer will help to stimulate root growth. During the fall following transplanting, apply one third of a pound of ammonium nitrate or one pound 10-10-10 per one inch of trunk diameter measuring six inches above the ground. The fertilizer should be applied under the branch spread of the tree. Do not let the fertilizer come into contact with the tree's trunk, roots, or branches.

If you fertilize your lawn, your trees are probably receiving an adequate amount of nutrients and additional fertilizer will probably not be needed.

Staking Trees:

Most trees do not need to be staked at planting. In fact, a tree that has been properly taken care in the nursery will not need it. The only time this practice is necessary is when there is a danger that the tree will be blown over. Studies have shown that trees that are not staked tend to establish more quickly with stronger root and trunk systems. If the situation requires staking, do so properly. Place three stakes equidistance from the planting hole area. Place securing lines two thirds of the way up the tree. Metal wires work well as support wires, but to avoid girdling the tree, you should insert the portion of the wire that contacts the tree in an old rubber hose. Stakes are no longer necessary a year after the tree has been transplanted, and should be removed.

Sources:

http://www.treeboard.org/plant_tree.aspx#hole

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id80/id80.htm>

<http://www.arborday.org/trees/treeguide/>

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/59/>

If you have any questions about planting and maintaining trees, please contact the Madison County Cooperative Extension Service at 859-623-4072.