



# Tree Planting

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## General Guidelines

**Optimal planting times:** early morning, late afternoon or a cool, overcast day. Keep plants moist and in the shade until planted.

**Soil** -. You may need to amend your existing soil by adding compost, manure, or leaf litter. Aim for a mix of 2/3 garden soil and 1/3 organic matter. (Your soil may be perfectly fine as is.) Mix the soil thoroughly and do not add fertilizer.

**Planting Holes** - Dig a hole twice as wide as the root mass and slightly deeper than the root ball. Put a little soil back into the bottom of the hole so that the top of the root ball will be level with the top of the existing soil. A hole too deep leads to plant stress. You want the soil to settle without leaving any air pockets.

**Mulch** - Do not mulch too deeply. Use 1" of mulch to cover the root ball and 2" deep beyond the root ball. Planting too deep or burying plants in mulch are the #1 reasons for planting failures.

**Water** - The success of your plants depends on proper watering. When you plant, give your plantings a full, thorough soaking. Ideally, your plants will receive 2" of rain a week but if nature doesn't cooperate, avoid wide sprinkling with the hose and soak the root zone deeply instead. Newly planted shrubs and trees should be watered 3 times a week for the first two weeks (unless it has rained at least 1" a week.) As the plant establishes itself, watering two times a week or once a week will be sufficient.

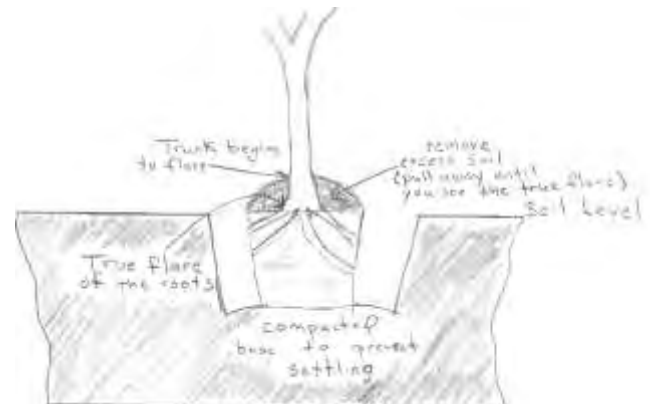
## Balled-and-Burlapped Shrubs and Trees

Take a moment to inspect the root ball of the tree you are about to plant. In the process of digging up trees and shrubs surrounding soil can sometimes be accidentally mounded up over the root ball. This soil, anywhere from 2-6" high, is not really part of the real root ball and must be removed so that the tree or shrub will not DIE.

Dig a hole the same depth and 2-3 times wider than the existing root ball. The sides of the hole should be rough, not smooth. Prepare the soil by incorporating organic matter (compost) into 2/3 of the excavated soil. Set aside the remaining 1/3 of the soil to make a berm (water basin) later on. Place the plant in the center of the hole on top of undisturbed or compacted soil (to prevent settling).

Before putting the plant in the hole, check for root flare and make final adjustments for correct hole depth. It is better to plant 1-2" too high than 1-2" too deep.

Position the plant in the hole and carefully bend down the upper 1/4 portion of the wire basket. Fold down the burlap from the upper one-third of the root ball.



Do not remove the lower portion of the burlap covering the bottom two-thirds of the root ball. It is important that the root ball of the shrub or tree is not broken. **Do not** cut the wire basket as this can compromise the root ball. Make sure the twine around the trunk and across the top of the ball is cut and removed. Sometimes the twine can be plastic and if buried it would strangle the plant.

*Be careful to pull excess soil away from the trunk of the plant (see diagram & explanation) to assess correct planting depth. The original soil lines of the root ball should be at ground level.* Put in some of the excavated soil around the root ball to fill the bottom third of the hole. Pour in a bucket of water and let it drain away. Spread more soil and lightly pack it down until the hole is 2/3 filled. Water again. Fill with soil to within an inch of the surrounding surface. Lightly pack down. Form a watering basin (berm 2"-3" tall) with the reserved soil around the existing root ball of the tree or shrub and water again. When the water has soaked in, mulch lightly (approximately 1" deep) to cover the width of the root ball and then mulch 2" deep beyond the root ball. Staking may be beneficial for some trees. Keep the plant well watered for the first year after planting. Avoid periods of over or under watering; try to keep the soil consistently moist.

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