

Planting Trees

In planting trees, consideration should be given to their mature height in spacing. Smaller growing trees, such as dogwoods and redbuds, generally mature in the 15 to 25 foot tall range (depending on variety), while other trees such as maples, oaks and poplars will grow into the 40 foot and up height range over the years. The rule of thumb on **spacing** trees is to plant them as far apart or away from any foundations as their mature height. The canopy of a tree can spread as wide as the tree will grow tall and the root system can encompass much of the canopy area.

Trees should not be planted over any septic system or near field lines. The roots will eventually seek out the moisture from the pipes and creep towards them during dry periods. For new landscaping, plant trees no closer than 50 feet. Ornamental grasses, perennials, groundcovers and low growing shrubs are best used in areas that contain septic, field or water lines.

Tip: In late winter/early spring when performing normal lawn clean up chores, prune or clip out any dead, broken, or crossing branches. It will give them a good clean appearance as they produce their new spring growth.

Grafted or budded trees, with a crook near the base of their trunk, should be planted and mulched to the point of the crook leaving it exposed. This also applies to fruiting trees as most are grown by one of these methods.

Lombardy Poplar, Hybrid Poplar and Hybrid Willow (Husky sizes) should be planted an additional 12 to 18 inches above their root collar to secure them in the ground as they continue with their faster growth rate.

Preparation:

If you have hard/clay soil you may want to add sand and/or organic matter to the soil that you will be putting back in the hole. This will lessen the compacting of

the dirt around the root system after planting. Should your soil be loose/sandy soil, adding topsoil and/or organic matter will help to build the quality of the soil going back into the hole. After planting apply 2-3 inches of mulch during spring/summer to help minimize weeds and keep the plants cooler and moister. In fall, apply more mulch to give the plants at least 3 inches deep to help blanket the root system over winter.

Clip any broken or damaged tips/branches that may have occurred during transit or while waiting for planting.

Bare Root:

Dig holes 8-14 inches wide and 12 -14 inches deep. Put about 2 inches of water into the hole and allow the water to be soaked into the ground. While water is being soaked in, remove the plastic wrap and shredded newspaper from the roots. Holding the plant steady just above the root collar (the lighter line above the root system, where the soil came to on its original planting) level with the ground level, pull soil back into the hole with the other hand. Fill the hole around the root system with your soil mixture and lightly press soil in around the base of the plant. Water the plant again about the same amount as it took to fill in the 2 inches of the hole. (Water amount will vary with conditions) The soil around the base of the plant may sink in and you will need to apply more soil and lightly press down. Then apply 2-3 inches of mulch. For the first month, water plant every 4-5 days adjusting for good rainfall days. Gradually phase into watering less and less allowing the plant to stress for itself to find moisture. You may need to water more frequently during the hottest part of summer, possibly going back to every 4-5 days, especially during drought conditions.

Container:

Dig holes 8-14 inches wide and 12 -14 inches deep. Put about 2 inches of water into the hole and allow the water to be soaked into the ground. While water is being soaked in, tap the container bottom on the ground and cupping the plant base and top of container with one hand, tip the container completely over and gently pry the plants root system out of the pot. Holding the root system, with soil, in both hands firmly, gently pull the bottom of the root system as though to tear the bottom apart. Don't pull the root system apart, only loosen it up and allow the roots to stretch. Holding the plant steady at the base of the trunk, where the soil level begins, and level with the ground, pull soil back into the hole with the other hand. Fill the hole around the roots and container soil with your soil mixture and lightly press soil in around the base of the plant. Water the plant again about the same amount as it took to fill in the 2 inches of the hole. (Water amount will vary with conditions) The soil around the base of the plant may sink in and you will need to apply more soil and lightly press down. Then apply 2-3 inches of mulch. For the first month, water plant every 4-5 days adjusting for good rainfall days. Gradually phase into watering less and less allowing the plant to stress for itself to find moisture. You may need to water more frequently during the hottest part of summer, possibly going back to every 4-5 days, especially during drought conditions.

Fertilizing:

Don't fertilize during the first year in the ground. Applying aged compost or other organic matter will be more beneficial to the plants than any fertilizer. The second year, wait for the shrubs to begin to leaf out before beginning any fertilizing program. Check with your local hardware store for their recommendations on the plants that you are growing. A time release formula is great. Follow the

directions on the fertilize package. Many abuse easy mix and liquid fertilizers such as Miracle-Gro. Studies have shown that over use of these types of products will build up a high level of saline in the soil. Plants in the fertilized area will die as well as any future replants. It takes 3-5 years for the ground to become safe again.