



Site Preparation & Tree Planting Instructions

Almost there! Follow the steps below to prepare your site for planting:

1. **Strip vegetation** in a 4-foot diameter circle around where the tree will be planted and remove.
2. **Check for utility lines** before digging.
3. **Have hardwood bark or other mulch ready** for planting.
 - a. Enough to mulch a 4-foot diameter area around tree.
 - b. 4-6 inch layer.
4. **Have amendments ready** for planting
 - a. Gypsum
 - b. Rock phosphate
 - c. Greensand
 - d. Compost
5. **Have a source of water ready** for planting.

Time to plant! Select and follow the instructions below for the type of tree stock you have to plant.

Bare-Root Trees:

1. Keep the roots consistently moist before planting. You may soak the roots for thirty minutes in a bucket of water after removing the tree from the packaging and then keep them moist by covering the roots with wet newspapers until they are placed in the planting hole.
2. Prepare a planting hole sufficiently wide and deep to accommodate the roots without crowding. Use a digging fork to roughen the sides of the hole and to perforate the bottom of the hole in order to facilitate the growth of roots into the native soil.
3. Build a small mound in the bottom of the hole with soil taken out of the hole sufficiently high to support the tree at a level such that the soil line will reach the same level at which the tree was growing in the nursery when the hole is filled.



-
4. Sprinkle amendments into the hole. Use the following proportions:
 - a. Gypsum (about two cups)
 - b. Rock phosphate (about one cup)
 - c. Greensand (about one to two cups)
 - d. Compost (enough for about 1/2" for bottom of hole and 1" for topdressing after planting)
 5. Inspect the roots of the tree and prune any that are dead or broken. If any roots do not fit in the hole without bending or curving, enlarge the hole or prune the root to fit. When the tree is in place and the roots are distributed over the mound, begin to fill the hole with the soil that came out of it. *Do not include turf removed from the planting site.*
 6. Water as you fill the hole to remove air pockets and assure good root contact with the soil. Add water until no air bubbles emerge from the planting hole. Incorporate slow-release organic fertilizer in a band at least 6" away from trunk. Top dress with 1" of compost and cover the root zone with 4" of hardwood bark mulch. Leave 6" between the mulch and the trunk of the tree. *Do not put any fertilizer in the planting hole.*
 7. Staking of bare-root trees is usually unnecessary, except in the case of trees on very dwarfing root stocks, trees in very windy locations, or trees subject to damage by children or pets. If used, stakes should be removed after one year, except for those trees on very dwarfing rootstocks which must be staked for the life of the tree.
 8. Ensure that the tree receives adequate water until the ground freezes (about 1" per week). Adequate amounts of water are critical to trees for the first three years after planting and important after that.
-

Trees in Containers:

1. Keep the tree watered well before planting. (Do not use the trunk as a handle, but always lift and carry the tree by the pot.)
2. Prepare a planting hole sufficiently wide and deep to accommodate the root ball of the tree without crowding (width- about twice the size of the root ball, depth- only as deep as needed). Roughen the sides of the hole and perforate the bottom of the hole with a digging fork in order to facilitate the growth of the roots into the native soil.



3. Sprinkle amendments into the hole. Use the following proportions:
 - a. Gypsum (about two cups)
 - b. Rock phosphate (about one cup)
 - c. Greensand (about one to two cups)
 - d. Compost (enough for about 1/2" for bottom of hole and 1" for topdressing after planting)
 4. Place the tree's pot on its side and gently roll it back and forth to loosen the soil from the pot. Gently pull the pot away from the root ball. Tease some of the roots from the root ball, or, if very root bound, cut through the roots on four sides of the root ball to encourage root growth into the native soil. Prune any damaged or dead roots.
 5. Place the root ball on the undisturbed soil in the bottom of the hole and ensure that the soil line of the refilled hole will reach the soil line of the tree's root ball. Begin to fill the hole with the soil that came out of the hole. *Do not include turf removed from planting area.*
 6. Water as you fill the hole to remove air pockets and ensure good root to soil contact. Add water until no more air bubbles emerge from the planting hole. Incorporate slow-release organic fertilizer in a band at least 6" from the trunk. Top dress with 1" of compost and cover root zone with 4" of hardwood bark mulch, leaving 6" between the mulch and the trunk. *Do not put any fertilizer in the planting hole.*
 7. Place two 6' stakes on either side of the tree outside the root zone oriented in such a manner that the prevailing winds will pass between them like a football in a successful field goal. Fasten these stakes to the tree with non-abrasive ties tensioned to the point that the tree can still move slightly in response to wind pressure. (Remove the stakes after one year, unless the tree is on a very dwarfing rootstock, in which case it will be staked for life.)
 8. Ensure that the tree receives adequate water until the ground freezes (about 1" per week). Adequate amounts of water are critical to trees for the first three years after planting and important after that.
-

***Suggested Timeline:***

The following are approximate suggested timelines for both Spring and Fall fruit tree plantings for our area:

- Spring: April 1st -May 31st
- Fall: October 1st -December 15th

The dates listed above are general approximations- for any given year, be sure to determine the approximate “last frost date” (for Spring) and the date of dormancy (for Fall). You can contact the nursery from which your tree(s) will be purchased in order to determine these exact dates.