



Tree Planting Notes

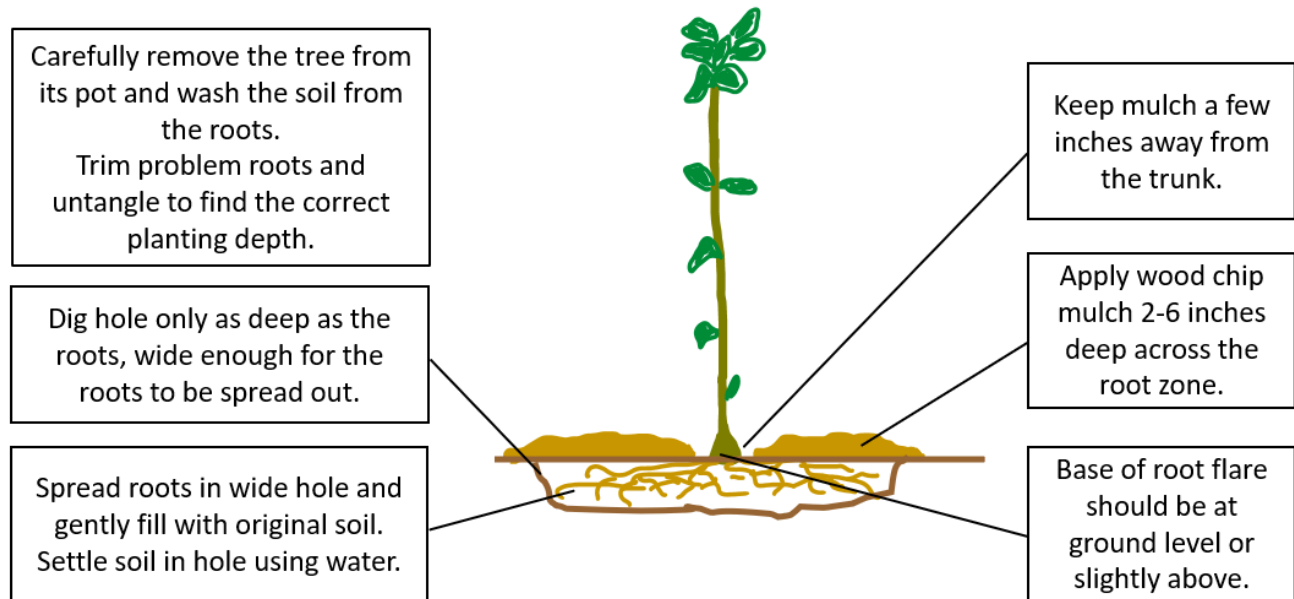
These notes supplement this video: https://youtu.be/Z_VJ5joXtHc

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Planting a tree



This guidance is intended for home gardeners.

Step by step: Planting a Tree

- Start with a small tree, 1, 3 or 5 gallon size.
 - Best chance of establishing successfully.
 - Easy to handle.
 - Less expensive than larger trees.

- Assemble tools:
 - Shovel
 - Wheelbarrow or other large container that can hold soil and water
 - Hose or water source
 - Clippers
 - Mulch
- Take the tree out of the pot.
 - Leave the nursery stake in place for now, it will protect the tree while it is being handled.
 - Gently tap the sides of the pot to release the root ball; watering may help as well.
 - Don't pull on the trunk, it's ok to pull on the nursery stake.
- Wash the soil from the roots into the wheelbarrow or container.
 - Once the soil is removed, keep the roots from drying out.
 - Save the soil and water in the wheelbarrow.
- Identify the root flare (often buried in nursery pots) – the area where the main roots attach to the trunk.
- All roots should be growing directly outward and away from the trunk.
 - Trees can't straighten their own roots once they are growing in the wrong direction.
 - Cut and remove all roots growing at odd angles, with kinks, or circling/wrapping around the tree.
 - If the root is soft and you can pull it in the right direction and it stays, you can keep it.
 - If the cut root has a stub, make sure the stub faces outward from the trunk.
 - Untangle the remaining roots.
 - Leave the roots in the water in the wheelbarrow while digging the hole.
- Dig a shallow and wide hole.
 - The hole should be just deep enough for the root ball and to keep the root flare at or a little above ground level - never dig a hole deeper than is needed.
 - Dig a hole wide enough so the roots have room to be spread out.
 - Fill the hole with water and let it drain.
- Place the tree in the center of the hole.
 - Spread the roots outwards in the wide hole.
 - The root flare should stay just above ground level.
 - The top roots should be just below ground level.
 - Fill the hole with native soil; don't add amendments or potting soil.
 - Water in the soil so it settles gently around the roots, filling in big air pockets.
 - Do not step in the hole, or push on the soil or roots.

- Remove the nursery stake - cut the ties.
 - If left in place, the nursery stake will inhibit proper growth.
 - If the tree is standing well, there's no need to add stakes unless there are special conditions (animals that may push on the tree, a high-wind area).

- Stakes:
 - Only add support stakes, outside the root ball, if the tree does not remain straight without support or in a high wind area where the tree would be blown off vertical.
 - Use one or two stakes and tie low and loose.
 - The fewer stakes the better; the tree needs to move in the wind to build its caliper and taper properly.
 - Stakes should be placed outside the root ball.
 - Never use a stake that is taller than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the height of the tree to avoid damaging the permanent branches
 - Tie only as high as necessary to keep the trunk vertical.
 - Tie loose enough to allow the tree to move at least 2 inches in each direction.
 - Use a nail in the stake to set the tie height.
 - Use soft ties that are wide so they don't cut or rub the tree; do not use wire.
 - Tie loosely, again so the tree can move.
 - **Remove support stakes** when the root system is established (6-12 months or longer, depending on the type of tree).

- Add mulch.
 - Chipped wood works well; keeps the soil moist and cool.
 - Do not put mulch against the trunk, but all around on top of the planting hole, a few inches from the trunk.
 - Mulch at least 2" deep.

- Keep the tree well watered for at least the first two years while it is getting established.
 - If a lot of roots were cut, don't be surprised if the tree doesn't grow for a while - it is putting its energy into building up its roots again.

Congratulations! The tree you have planted is set up for success: to be healthy, strong, and beautiful for many years to come.