



## Planting & Care Guide for Woody Plants

### Planting Instructions:

Dig a hole approximately twice as wide as the size of the root ball of your plant, and only dig as deep as the root ball or slightly shallower for potted shrubs. The top of the root ball should be at or slightly above the finished grade of the planting area. If you are planting a potted or B&B tree the root flare should be found before digging and placement in the hole, and that root flare should be planted at the level of the ground around the tree. This may require removing some of the soil and fibrous roots from the upper part of the root ball

Before the plant is placed in the ground you will need to "Root Prune" the plant. This can be done by slicing or cutting the side's and bottom of the root ball to break up any circling roots that may have developed while the plant was grown in its container. More root bound plants will require more vigorous root pruning than less root bound plants. B&B trees typically require less root pruning than potted trees and shrubs, but may still be necessary. Although this root pruning may feel like you are harming the plant, the opposite is true. These roots will respond to this pruning by growing vigorously.

After the tree or shrub has been placed in the ground and is at the proper depth you may begin to back fill with the dirt that was removed. If soil amendments are to be added you can mix them with the original soil at this time. In most cases the plant will grow normally with the original soil used for backfill. Try to avoid packing the soil around the plant as you backfill as it is more difficult for water to penetrate compacted soil and roots to grow outward. The last step in this process would be to create a small ring or dike around the freshly planted tree or shrub to help direct water onto the main root ball during the watering process. This ring can be made using excess dirt from the planting and will vary in size based off the size of plant you installed.

### Watering:

Proper watering of your newly installed tree or shrub is vital to the health and longevity of the plant. The general rule is that a plant requires about 1" of rainfall every 7-10 days once established. Immediately after installation you will want to thoroughly soak the root ball. This can be done by inserting an open ended hose into the loosely backfilled dirt around the plant. Leave the hose on a slow trickle (about the size of your pinky finger ), too much water pressure will cause the water to fill the hole to fast and wash away loose soil and/or not properly soak the root ball. This initial watering will also allow the soil to settle out naturally, filling large voids in the backfilled soil. Another good way to properly soak a newly planted tree or shrub is to let the hose run slowing at the base of the plant for several minuets to allow the water to soak down into the main root system of the plant. If you are adding liquid root stimulator this would be the appropriate time to do so after carefully following the instructions on the container label. Consistent, but not excessive water is key to the success of your new plant. Remember that too much water can be more harmful than not enough. Please reference our watering guide online for more detailed and long term watering instructions.

**Mulching:**

Mulching your newly planted tree or shrub is highly recommended and is beneficial to the health and longevity of your plant. Mulching should occur after the initial watering and a general rule is to apply 2"-4" of wood mulch around the plant. Rock mulch is also acceptable, however wood mulch is preferred especially for potted and B&B tree's planted in your yard. The wood mulch helps to retain soil moisture, prevents large soil temperature fluctuations, keeps weeds down, and keeps lawn mowers and weed whips away from the tree or shrub. Before you put down the mulch be sure to remove any grass, or weeds that may be present in the mulch zone to help prevent them from growing or sprouting through the mulch. Landscape fabric or heavy duty plastic is only required under rock mulch and is not recommended under wood mulch. Make sure, no matter what type of mulch you use, to keep from placing the mulch directly against the stem, trunk or bark of your tree or shrub. This is especially important when mulching a newly planted potted or B&B tree.

**Staking (tree's only):**

Staking your new tree is only recommended if the tree can not stand freely on its own. This typically is done in windy areas. A newly planted tree should usually only need to be staked for one growing season or less in some cases. Be sure to use a non-abrasive material to tie around the tree to prevent damage. Also allow enough "slack" so that the tree can still move slightly, this will help the tree to develop a stronger root system and not rely on the stake to remain upright. Sargent's has staking kits available for potted and B&B trees.

**Fertilizing:**

Your new tree or shrub has already been fertilized and aside from a liquid root stimulator applied at the planting process you will not need to fertilize your new tree or shrub this season. It is recommended that you fertilize each spring with a granular slow release type of fertilizer. Be sure to follow the package instructions carefully as over-fertilizing can be harmful to the plant.