

Tips for Planting Your Tree

We will give you a copy of the Tree Owner's Manual when you pick up your tree. This booklet has good directions for planting, but if you just can't wait to read it, you can find it here. [Tree Owner's Manual](#). Below are some important things we want to emphasize since they can determine the health and, possibly, the survival of your tree.

**Trees from the gravel bed should be kept in the bag until they go in the ground.
Keep the bag out of the sun. Do not leave in a hot car. Do not allow the roots to dry out.
Plant your tree *the day you receive it.***

The first step in planting your tree is to locate the root flare (also called the root collar). This is the dividing line between the trunk and the root system and should be a ground level. You can identify the root flare by looking for a point where the base of the trunk gets a little wider and/or where the first woody roots emerge from the trunk. It may be necessary to remove a few inches of soil from a container tree before you find the root flare. The root flare should be obvious on trees from the gravel bed.

The next step (for a container tree) is to remove it from the container, loosen up the soil and examine the roots. You can break up the soil with a hand rake (or alternatively by jabbing it with the end of a shovel). Often, the roots of trees grown in containers grow in circles around the sides and/or at the bottom of the container. Since a root that starts growing in a circle will continue to do so even after it is out of its container, it is important to cut these roots off, beginning at the point where it first begins going in a circle.

We suggest that you **DO NOT** dig the hole before you pick up your tree since you will not be able to determine the proper depth until you see the tree. The hole should be as deep as the root ball and twice the root ball's diameter. Good diagrams are on page 10 of the manual. The root flare must be at ground level or slightly above when the tree is planted.

Gravel bed trees: The hole is dug as described above and you are ready to plant. It may be helpful to have one person hold the tree while another puts the soil back in the hole. Try to get the soil in spaces between and under the roots.

Native soil (the soil that came out of the hole) is the only thing you should put back in the hole, except water! Amendments (i.e. fertilizers, etc.) are not recommended. If desired, you can put compost on top of the root ball after planting.

Water immediately after planting: Remove the nozzle from a hose. Stick hose down deep in the dirt in the planting hole and allow the hole to fill with water. It's important to completely saturate the soil. Holding the trunk, gently move the tree back and forth a little while you water. This helps get air pockets out and settles the soil. If you see lots of bubbles when you wiggle the tree, repeat the process. This is really important for trees from gravel beds since it may be difficult to get the soil between all the roots, especially if you have a clay soil. Air pockets are dead zones for roots. The same can be accomplished with buckets of water (poured gently) if necessary.

Mulch is beneficial, but do not put mulch on top of the root ball. (Avoid the dreaded mulch volcano) Place the mulch in a circle at the edge of the root ball and as far out as you please. This will allow every drop of rain to go into the soil and help with moisture retention around the edge of the root ball. This should encourage the roots to grow out into the surrounding soil.

Watering: The basic guide for watering newly planted trees is 15 gallons, every 2 weeks from May – October. It's important that the water be delivered slowly so that it soaks in deep. Of course, every situation is different: If the weather is hot and dry, water weekly. If your tree is in the sun all day or near a driveway or other surface that gets hot, it will need more water in the summer. [Visit this page on our website for tips.](#)

