

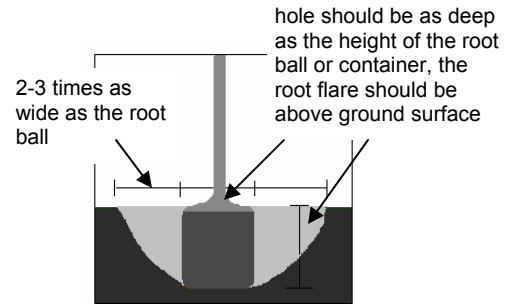


# Tree Planting Guide

## Step by Step Planting Instructions

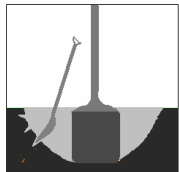
### Site Preparation

1. Dig a hole that is equal to the depth of the container and two to three times as wide as the container (or rootball, if the tree is balled and burlapped). Use the handle of the shovel as a tool to measure the approximate depth and width of the container and hole. **The trunk or root flare (the part of the trunk that widens and flares out into the roots) should always remain above ground.** The hole should be a saucer shape with the deepest part at the center where the tree will be placed.



use a pickaxe to remove sod

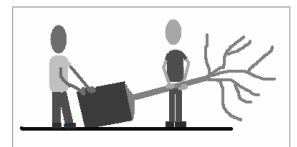
- ◆ Lawn preparation: Break through the grass in a circle and pull away the sod. A pickaxe is useful for this step. After planting, sod can be used to create a berm (a low mound around the perimeter of the hole to help retain water).
- ◆ Rocky soils: Avoid removing rocks as much as possible. Removing any rocks or stones from the hole you are digging creates extra space that can affect the depth of the hole and the amount of back fill available to fill around and over the roots. If you encounter a large rock, slide the hole over a foot or two.
- ◆ Shallow soil: If bedrock or large boulders are close to the surface, dig a wider hole. Make sure that the root ball is broken up thoroughly. Spread the roots wide before covering them with soil.
- ◆ Roots in soil: Use loppers to cut through roots. Sheared root edges will sprout feeder roots that will compete with the new tree. Shear roots at the edge of the hole.
- ◆ Clay soils: Clay soils are comprised of fine particles and are often very heavy and dense. Roughen up the edges of the hole with the shovel tip to enable easier air, water, and root penetration.



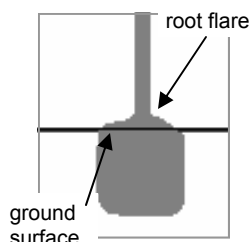
### Planting

2. Roughen the edges of the hole to allow for easier root penetration.

3. Lay container on its side and tap around the sides to loosen soil and roots. **Carefully remove the tree by pulling on the container and supporting the tree.** (If the tree is balled and burlapped, do not remove burlap and wire until root ball is in the hole).

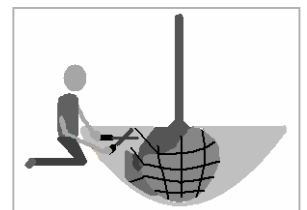


4. Move the tree to the edge of the hole by twisting or rolling the root ball, or by picking it up under the root ball if small enough. **Do not lift the tree by the trunk.**
5. Slide the tree into the hole. Or, if small enough, pick it up under the root ball and place it in the center of the hole.



6. Match the root flare to the level of the surrounding ground. Backfill or dig the hole deeper as needed. If the ground surface is sloped, match the trunk flare with the lower edge of the hole.

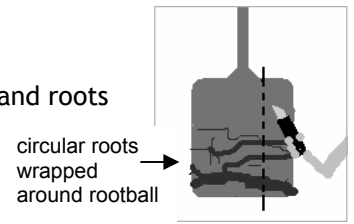
- ◆ Containerized trees: Loosen and untangle roots so that they radiate away from the trunk. If necessary, use a razor or sharp knife to make a few vertical slits down the sides of the root ball to separate roots.
- ◆ Balled and burlapped trees: cut and remove at least half of the wire basket and as much of the burlap as possible.



# Proper planting will help your tree grow healthy and strong.

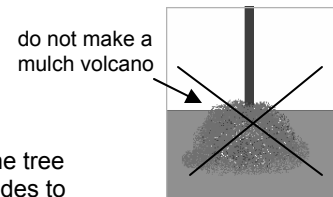
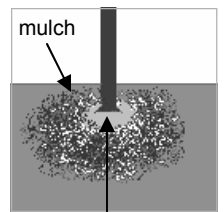
## Check for:

- ♦ **Circular roots:** Circular roots are roots that are wrapped around the root ball. As the tree and roots grow bigger, these roots will eventually strangle and kill the tree. To avoid this girdling effect, unwrap or cut roots and straighten them out before planting. A sharp blade can also be used to score 3 or 4 vertical slits in the root ball to separate circular roots.
- ♦ **Angled roots:** Roots that have 90-degree angles should be pruned at the bend.
- ♦ **Buried trunk flare:** Trees are often potted too deeply. If the trunk flare is not above the soil surface it has been potted too deeply. Feeder roots that grow from the trunk above the flare should be pruned.



## Final Steps

7. Check that the tree is perpendicular to the ground from all angles.
8. Fill around the root ball with soil. When the hole is about half filled with soil, pour 2 gallons (for trees that are 2-4 feet tall) to 5 gallons (for trees that are over 4 feet tall) of water. Let water soak in and add remaining soil. **Do not cover the root flare with soil; the root flare should be visible.**
9. Evenly apply a 2-4 inch layer of mulch (or a 4-6 inch layer of hay, or both hay and mulch) around the tree, covering all the bare soil. **Create a 2 inch gap around the tree to prevent contact with mulch.** Heaping mulch against tree or creating 'mulch volcanoes' traps moisture against bark and can lead to rot, insect infestations, and disease.

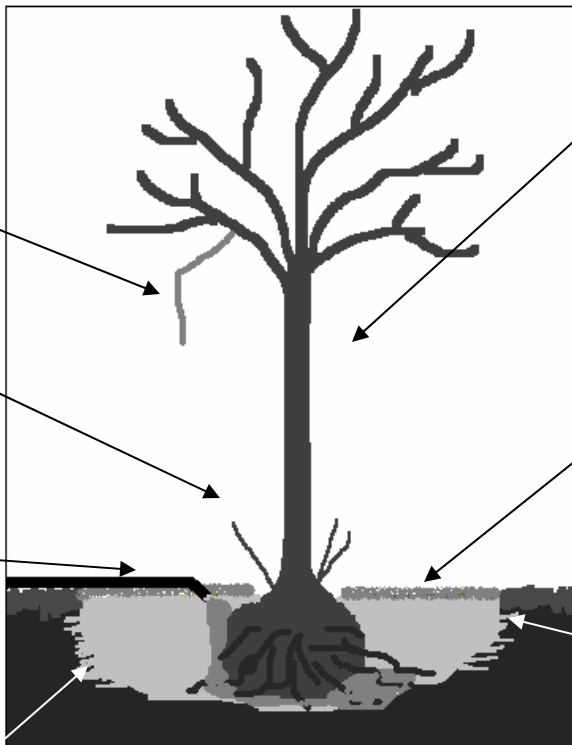


DO NOT PRUNE within the first 2-3 years of planting a new tree. If there is a dead branch it can be carefully removed with pruners.

If suckers have grown from the root ball, carefully remove them with pruners.

Water by using a slow trickle from a hose or a bucket (see step 8, above).

Roughen or score the edges of the hole to allow for easier root penetration.



Look at the tree from all sides to make sure it is standing straight.

Apply 2-4 inches of mulch or 4-6 inches of hay. The mulch should NOT touch the bark of the tree, it should look like a bagel around the tree, NOT a volcano.

The width of the hole should be 2-3 times the width of the rootball.



## Helpful Resources

[www.growbostongreener.org](http://www.growbostongreener.org)  
[www.bostonforest.org](http://www.bostonforest.org)

### General Tree Facts/Species Facts

[www.treelink.org/docs/res\\_ucf.php](http://www.treelink.org/docs/res_ucf.php)  
[www.arborday.org/](http://www.arborday.org/)  
[www.treesaregood.org/](http://www.treesaregood.org/)  
[www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/)

### Tree Care

**General Care**  
[www.treecaretips.org/](http://www.treecaretips.org/)

**Mulch**  
[www.hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC1604.htm](http://www.hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC1604.htm)

**Pruning**  
[www.na.fs.fed.us/Spfo/pubs/howtos/ht\\_prune/prun001.htm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/Spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/prun001.htm)

### Arborists/Tree Professionals

[www.earthworksboston.org](http://www.earthworksboston.org)  
[www.massarbor.org](http://www.massarbor.org)  
[www.isa-arbor.org](http://www.isa-arbor.org)