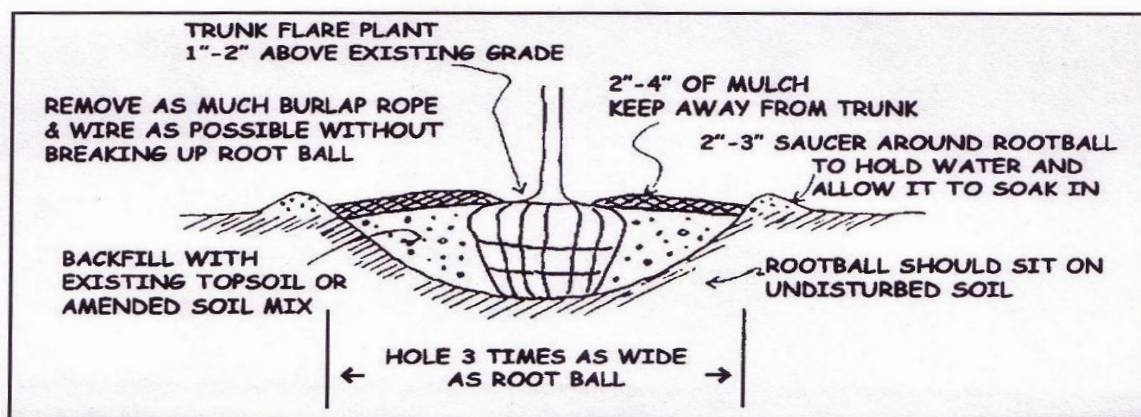


PLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS

Please note: Trees and shrubs should be planted within 7-10 days of purchase. Until that time, store them in a semi-shaded area and don't allow them to dry out.

PLANTING: Dig a hole 3 times wider than the root ball or pot size. Sides should slope to the center. Container grown plants should be planted to the depth of the soil in the pot, however, there may be a concentration of roots at the bottom or sides of the pot that will need to be cut. In order to encourage the roots to grow out into the newly prepared soil, it helps to take a knife, pruning shears, or a hand cultivator and loosen and/or cut the encircling roots. Make sure the hole is slightly shallower than the root ball so the crown of the plant is elevated 1-2" and water will run away from the center. Do not dig or loosen the soil deeper than is necessary, the plant should have a firm base to sit on so it does not settle.



For ball and burlapped (B&B) trees and shrubs the depth of the hole is determined by measuring the distance from the trunk flare to the bottom of the root ball. To find the trunk flare, gently dig down along the stem to the point where roots first spread out from the trunk; this is often several inches below the surface. Dig the hole slightly shallower so the crown of the plant is elevated 1-2" and water will run away from the center.

Place the plant in the center of the hole and remove the soil from above the root flare when necessary. As always, also remove plant from any containing materials such as burlap, rope, metal cages, or plastic pots, but do not disturb the root ball to the point that it breaks up.

FILLING: Experts today recommend backfilling with the soil dug from the planting hole. However, if the soil is sandy, heavy clay or poor quality then the addition of soil amendments such as compost, good topsoil or commercially available soil mixes should help the plant to grow into the new location. Our staff recommends products such as Fafard Complete Planting Mix, Coast of Maine Quoddy or Penobscot Blends, Moo Doo, or Moo Plus. Back fill around the root ball with the soil mixture and lightly tamp to eliminate air pockets.

Water the plant well, filling the planting hole to the rim and letting it drain. This process will also help settle the soil and you will likely need to add soil to bring it back to level. We recommend creating a saucer or well (see sketch) with a 2-3" dam or lip at the edge of the planting area. This retains water and allows for economical and efficient watering. On a sloped location this would be necessary to prevent runoff, thus ensuring the new plants retain water.

WATERING: After planting your shrub or tree, the aim of your watering practices should be to keep the soil evenly moist. Sprinkler systems and rainfall should not be expected to meet this need. Hand watering, drip irrigation, or soaker hoses are best for the plants. In general it is better to water slowly and deeply rather than to apply frequent shallow waterings.

One should water when soil begins to lightly dry out. Check several inches down to see how moist the soil is (not the mulch) before watering. Do not water on a schedule, but according to the plant's needs. Weather, temperature, location, soil conditions, amount of sun and variety of plant will be the controlling factors. For example, a plant in a sunny location will generally need more water than one in a cool, shady spot.

A modest (2-4") layer of mulch on top of the disturbed soil cuts down on the evaporation and lowers soil temperatures so it should reduce watering frequency. Be careful to keep mulches from touching or covering the crown or trunk of the plant as this could cause disease. Remember to check to make sure the water is getting into the soil and the mulch is not acting as a barrier.

STAKING: Large size trees and those with thin trunks may benefit from being staked. A small tree can be easily supported with a single sturdy stake. Make sure the stake is in solid ground and not just in the root ball. Larger specimens will likely need support from 2 or 3 directions. Check with our experts for guidelines. There are kits available for staking. It is important to make sure any guying material does not injure the bark or restrict future growth of the plant. Most staking should be unnecessary after a growing season.

*Diagram adapted from UMass Extension's "Planting and Maintaining Trees and Shrubs"