Before Planting

1) Select the correct tree for site: mndnr.gov/treecare
2) Contact Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1155 or gopherstateonecall.org before digging

After Planting

Mulching

Applying mulch, such as wood chips, around a tree has many benefits.

- Improved growing conditions
  - Retains moisture
  - Controls weeds and grasses
  - Adds nutrients
  - Insulates soil
- Protection of trunk and roots

Mulch that is applied too deeply and against the tree (mulch volcano) is harmful. It can rot the tree's bark and roots, lead to insect and disease problems, and deprive roots of oxygen. Use a thin layer of mulch on poorly drained soils to avoid pooling of water.

Watering

Watering a tree is critical to its survival during the first three years. Until the ground freezes, provide 15-25 gallons of water per week when it hasn't rained. After the first few years, continue to water trees during dry times. Tree water bags may make watering easier.

Tree Guards

A plastic or metal mesh tree guard can be installed around the tree's trunk to protect it from animal, mower, and trimmer injury. The tree guard must be removed or replaced as the tree grows.

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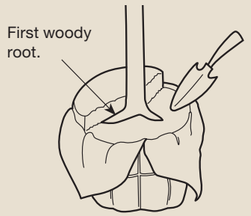
Funding provided by the USDA Forest Service

Celebrate Arbor Month—plant trees.

How to Plant a Balled and Burlapped Tree

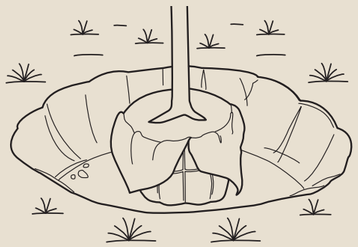
1 Keep root ball moist at all times. Dry roots die.

2 Loosen top of burlap and remove excess soil to top of first woody root.

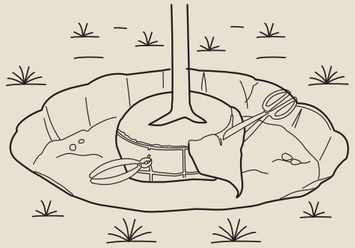


3 Dig a hole two times the width of root ball and as deep as distance from bottom of root ball to top of first woody root.

4 Carefully place tree in hole, making sure it stands straight and top of first woody root is at ground level.



5 Backfill hole halfway up root ball and then cut and remove visible portions of wire basket and burlap without disturbing the root ball.

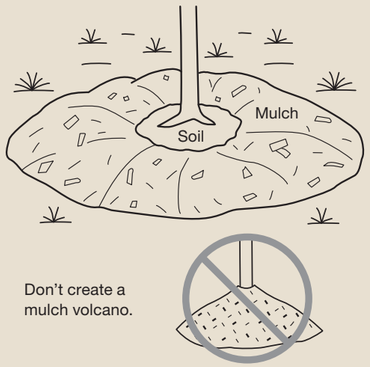


6 Finish backfilling hole to top of first woody root, leaving no exposed burlap.

7 Heel in soil with foot over entire backfill area to remove air pockets from the soil.

8 Water root ball and entire backfill area.

9 Layer 2"–4" of mulch over backfilled area, keeping mulch away from trunk.

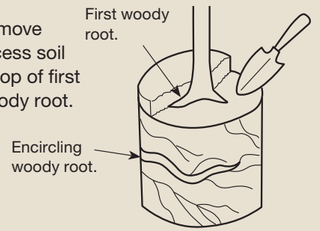


How to Plant a Containerized Tree

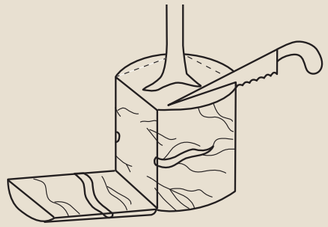
1 Keep root ball moist at all times. Dry roots die.

2 Remove tree from container by holding trunk with one hand and pushing away or down on container with other hand.

3 Remove excess soil to top of first woody root.

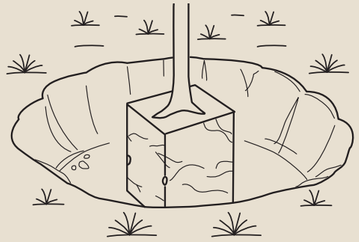


4 If encircling woody roots (pencil size or larger) are found, remove by sawing off sides of root ball.



5 Dig a hole two times the width of root ball and as deep as distance from bottom of root ball to top of first woody root.

6 Carefully place tree in hole, making sure it stands straight and top of first woody root is at ground level.

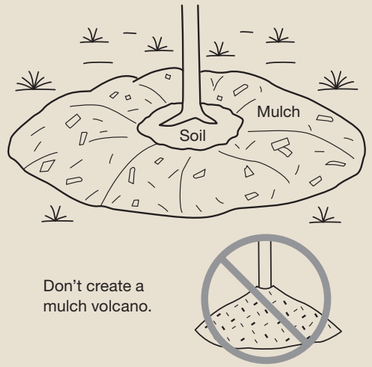


7 Backfill hole to top of first woody root.

8 Heel in soil with foot over entire backfill area to remove air pockets in the soil.

9 Water root ball and entire backfill area.

10 Layer 2"–4" of mulch over backfilled area, keeping mulch away from trunk.

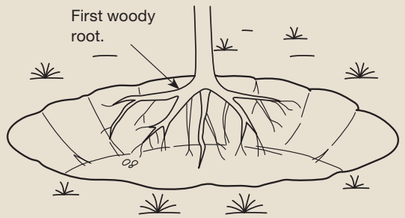


How to Plant a Bareroot Tree

1 Keep roots moist at all times. Dry roots die.

2 Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly deeper than root length.

3 Place roots in hole so top of first woody root is within 1" of soil surface.



4 Distribute roots evenly, making sure roots are straight and not doubled over or “J” rooted.

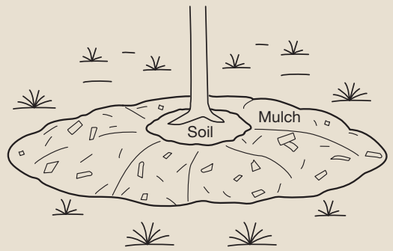
Don’t create a “J” root.

5 Keeping tree straight, backfill hole up to top of first woody root.

6 Heel in soil with foot over entire backfill area to remove air pockets from the soil.

7 Water entire backfill area.

8 Layer 2"–4" of mulch over backfilled area, keeping mulch away from trunk.



Don’t create a mulch volcano.

How to Plant a Bareroot Seedling

1 Keep roots moist at all times. Dry roots die.

2 Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly deeper than root length.

3 If hole cannot be dug deep enough to fit entire root system, trim roots with scissors to same length as seedling’s above ground height or 8 inches, whichever is longer.

Cut only if needed.

4 Place roots in hole so top of first root is slightly below surface level.

5 Distribute roots evenly, making sure roots are straight and not doubled over or “J” rooted.

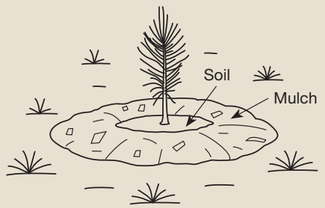
Don’t create a “J” root.

6 Backfill hole to slightly above top of first root.

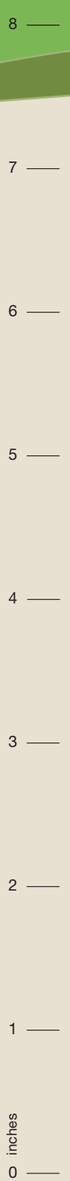
7 Heel in soil with foot to remove air pockets from the soil.

8 Water entire backfill area.

9 When feasible, place mulch around seedling, keeping mulch away from trunk.



Don’t create a mulch volcano.



FORESTRY

MNDNR

A Pocket Guide to Planting Trees

Celebrate Arbor Month—plant trees.

mndnr.gov/arbormonth