

Top 10 Steps for Successful Tree Planting



1. Select the right tree for the right location — this avoids serious problems in the future when an adaptable plant is planted in the ideal spot.
2. Move and store properly — never carry a tree by its trunk, and keep the pot or root-ball moist and in a shady location until planting.
3. Remove all labels, wires, cords or anything else attached to the plant. Items left on the tree can later girdle a branch or root.
4. Dig a proper hole — dig down into the root-ball to find the root flare or where the roots come out from the trunk. This is the right planting depth. Place the bottom of the tree on solid ground to avoid sinking deeper after planting. The width of the hole should be three times the diameter of the root ball.
5. Remove all containers from the root-ball — cut away plastic or peat pots and roll burlap and wire baskets back into the hole, cutting as much of the excess away as possible. This helps develop a healthy root system.
6. Backfill the hole with the same soil that was removed — amendments such as peat moss will do more harm than good.
7. Don't cut back the branches — only remove those which are damaged. Leaf buds release a hormone that encourages root growth. If the tree is cut back, the reduced number of leaf buds results in less hormone release and fewer roots being formed.
8. Water thoroughly — and then once a week for the first season if there is no rainfall.
9. Mulch around the tree — supply a 2 to 4-inch deep layer, about 2 to 3 times the diameter of the root ball. Keep the mulch away from the base of the trunk. Mulching conserves moisture and encourages root development.

Stake only when necessary — trees establish more quickly and grow faster when not staked. Staking should only limit root-ball movement rather than immobilize the trunk.

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