

Planting Trees and Shrubs

How well your new tree or shrub does is dependent on planting your new addition to your landscape properly. By using the following steps you will go a long way in ensuring the future health of your new tree or shrub.

STEP 1: Choose the right plant for the right location. Ensure soil, moisture, and shade requirements match the plant you have chosen

STEP 2: Care for the plant before planting. Keep the tree or shrub cool and moist as well as shaded. When handling the root ball, be careful.

STEP 3: Ensure the removal of all wires, labels, etc from the plant's stem.

STEP 4: Dig your hole as wide as possible. The hole you use for your new tree or shrub should be at least 3 times the diameter of the root ball. Make the hole saucer-shaped and as deep as the root ball is high. Make sure the root collar is level or just above the surrounding soil.

STEP 5: Remove wire baskets, burlap, or pot from the root ball. By removing these materials you minimize root system disturbances. If you find it difficult to remove the burlap, cut and peel it back for better watering.

STEP 6: Use soil from the hole you dug. Do not mix in fertilizer, sand or any organic material such as peat moss.

STEP 7: Once the new tree or shrub has been planted in the hole and back-filled using only soil removed from the hole, you can prune any broken or dead branches. Because the tree or shrub is so young do not cut back any of the health branches to reduce the crown.

STEP 8: Water the root zone once a week for the 1st year or two. Do not over-water. The majority of new tree or shrub roots are in the 1st 6-12 inches of soil. Water slowly to decrease the amount of runoff. By watering deeply and infrequently you will encourage deep root development which will aid in stability and strength in later years.

STEP 9: Aside from watering, the next most important thing you can do for your new tree or shrub is to apply an organic mulch such as wood chips, grass clippings or tree bark. This mulch reduces compaction, aids in moisture retention, and helps keep unwanted weeds from utilizing the bare space beneath the tree. Use a circle of mulch approximately 3 times the size of the root ball and increase this as the tree grows.

By following these steps you will help ensure a good start for the newest additions to your landscape.

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