

# Planting Containerized Trees





# Dig a hole



- Dig a hole 3 to 4 times wider than the container and only as deep as the existing root ball. The hole should have sloping sides like a saucer to allow for proper root growth. In heavy clay or compacted soils, square holes are better than round holes.
- If your planting hole has slick sides, roughen the sides and bottom with a pick or shovel. This makes it easier for root tips to penetrate into the native soil.

# Check for Good Drainage (Percolation)

- Soil must drain properly to keep the tree from drowning and developing root diseases. To check for proper drainage:
- Fill the hole completely with water and wait for all of the water to drain away.
- Fill the hole completely with water a second time and time how long it takes for all of the water to drain away.
- All of the water must drain away within 8-12 hours after the second filling (or at a rate of 1 to 2 inches per hour.) to result in the survival of your tree.





# Gopher Cages

- ½ inch poultry wire can be formed into gopher cages to help protect trees where gophers are a risk.
- Keep the top of the basket 2"-6" above the top of the soil.





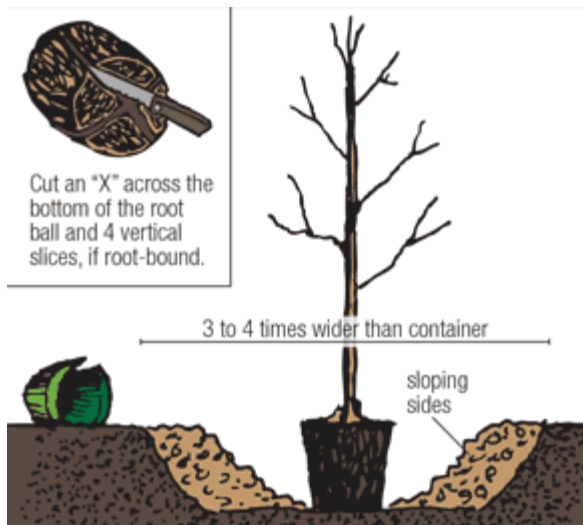
# Remove the tree from the container

- Carefully remove the tree from the container keeping the soil around the roots intact. It helps to tap the outside of the container to loosen the edge. Carefully slide the tree from the container. Don't yank the tree out of the container as this can separate the roots from the tree.



# Cut or Remove Circling Roots

- Sometimes containerized trees become root-bound or the roots look like they're about to circle the root ball. If your tree is like this, cut an X across the bottom of the root ball and four vertical slices along the sides of the root ball with a sharp knife





# Mycorrhizae

- Adding a product which can introduce mycorrhizae into the planting hole can benefit trees by adding to the planting hole and backfill soil.

## Benefits of Mycorrhiza

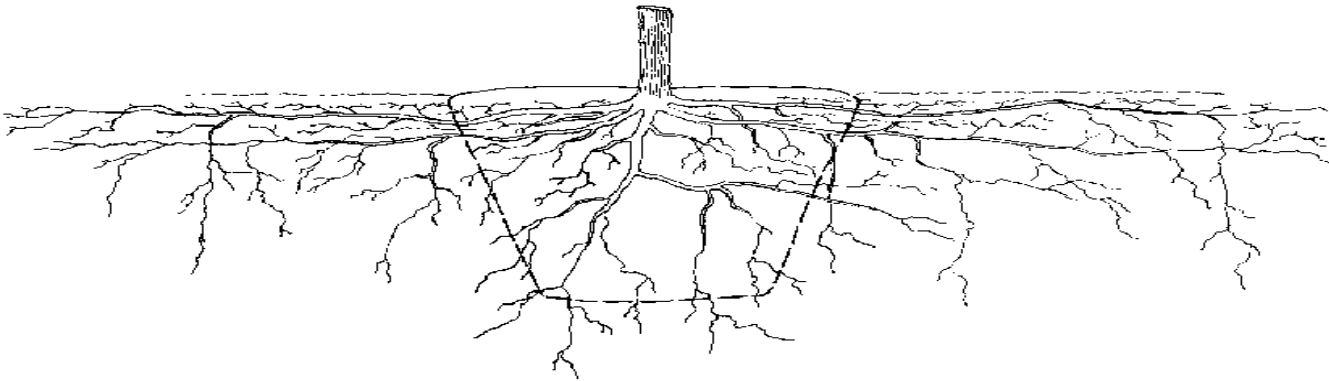
- Enhanced plant efficiency in absorbing water and nutrients (**especially phosphorous**) from the soil.
- Reduces fertility and irrigation requirements.
- Enhances plant health, vigor and drought resistance and minimizes stress.
- Increased pathogen resistance/protection.
- Enhances seedling growth, rooting of cuttings, and plant transplant establishment.
- Improved phytoremediation of petroleum and heavy metal contaminated sites.



# Organic Amendments

**Mixing organic amendments into planting holes for trees and shrubs is generally not recommended or beneficial.**

- At best, these amendments do no good as the root system on healthy plants will develop well beyond the amended planting hole.
- At worst, amendments in a planting hole can:
  - Restrict or inhibit the development of roots into the non-amended “native” soil.
  - Restrict the movement of water into the non-amended soil, forming a perched water table and causing the soil in the planting hole to become saturated and soggy.
  - Will decompose over time, causing the amended soil to compact and the crown of the plant to settle below surface of the non-amended soil. This settling frequently causes crown rot and can kill the plant.





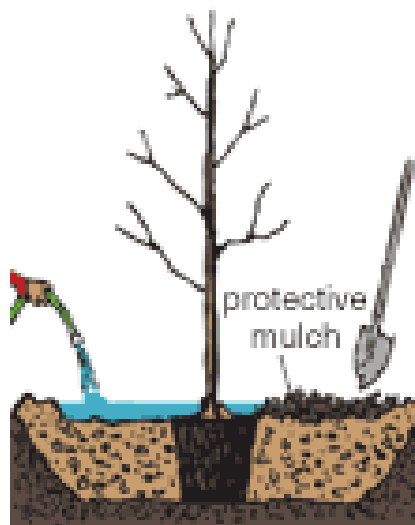
# Set the tree

- Set the tree in the middle of the hole. Avoid planting the tree too deep. If the root collar sits below the top of the hole, compact some soil under the tree so that the root flare at the base of the trunk is slightly above ground level.
- Using some soil, secure the tree in a straight position, then fill and firmly pack the hole **with the original soil**, making sure there aren't any air pockets. Keep backfilling until the soil is just below the root collar.



# Create a water-holding basin

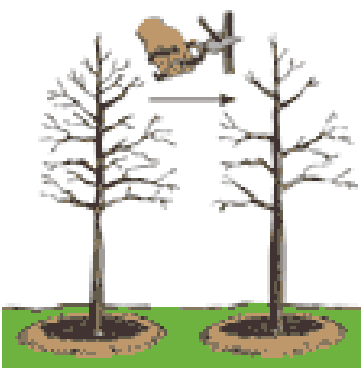
- Create a water-holding basin around the hole and give the tree a good watering. After the water has soaked in, spread protective mulch 2–4 inches deep in a 3-foot diameter area around the base of the tree, but not touching the trunk.



# Water Regularly

- The soil and mulch around your trees should be kept moist but not soggy. During dry weather, generously water the tree in the basin every 4 to 7 days during the first three months.
- After three months, water slowly at the dripline every 7 to 10 days during the first year.





# Remove any tags and labels

- Remove any tags and labels from the tree as these will affect the tree as it grows. You may need to prune any broken or dead branches.

# Pruning and Training

- Keep pruning to a minimum for the 1<sup>st</sup> year. Limit your pruning to removing the four D's (dead, damaged, diseased and dysfunctional) branches and remove or correct any co-dominant branches or branches with narrow crotch angles or included bark.
- Whenever possible, using training techniques to shape the tree and to avoid pruning wounds.



# Pruning and Training

## REMEMBER

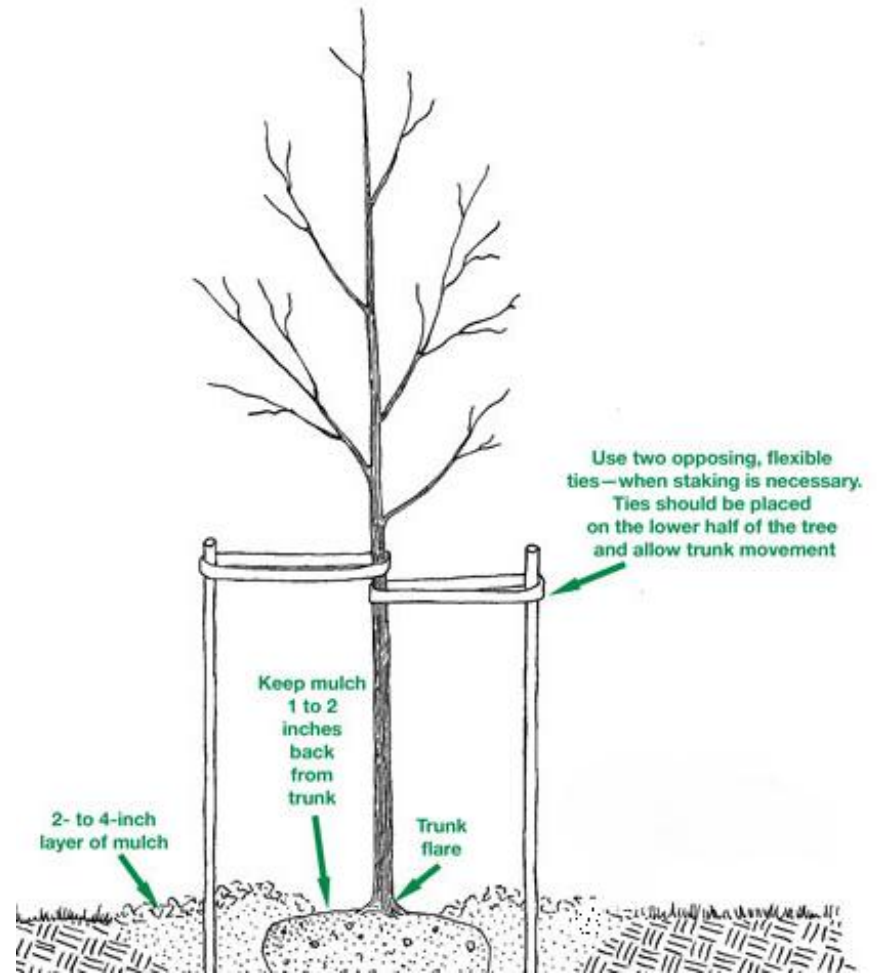
- More branches = more leaves = more food for the tree by photosynthesis = more energy for growth = a faster growing, healthier tree.





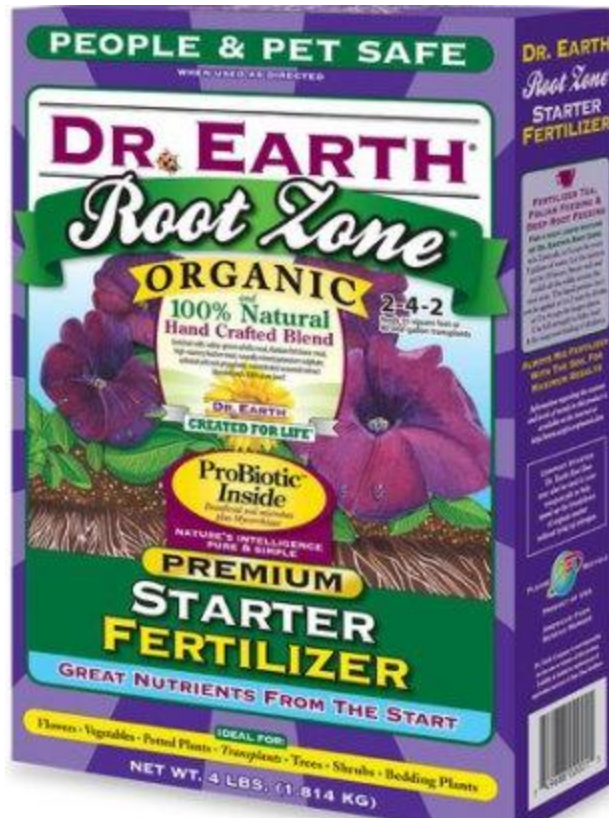
# Stake

- Remove the nursery stake that came tightly tied to the trunk after planting. Stake the tree loosely for protection or support if needed.
- Use only soft, pliable tree ties at least 1" in width. Do not use wire, even if it's inside a hose. Wire can cut into a trunk. If the trunk can't stand up on its own, stake it so that it stands upright.
- One of the most common methods is staking with two stakes used in conjunction with a wide, flexible tie material on the lower half of the tree. This will hold the tree upright, provide flexibility, and minimize injury to the trunk. The stakes should be placed outside of the root ball.
- Plan to remove stakes as soon as the tree can support itself, in 6 to 12 months.



# Fertilizer?

- *Do not* use fast release synthetic fertilizers, potting soil, planting mix or chemicals on your newly planted trees. Such products can damage or kill your young trees.



- Slow release fertilizers and organic fertilizers that have a higher ratio of phosphorous or that also contain mycorrhizae can benefit newly planted trees and plants and can assist the development of the root system.

- These products should be mixed into the soil in the planting site and backfill soil when planting.





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