

Sherdec Tree Service

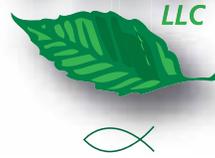
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Tree Planting

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Before You Plant

Select a tree or shrub suitable to the growing conditions at the planting site. When choosing a plant consider:

- does the plant prefer sunny or shady sites?
- does it require well drained soil or is it tolerant of heavier clay soils?
- will it out-grow the planting site at maturity?

The nursery or garden center where the plant is purchased can make recommendations of plants appropriate to your site conditions or see the Sherdec Tree Service Information sheet Tree Selection Based on Site Conditions

Avoid buying trees with these problems:

- multiple branches growing at one spot
- circling roots in the container
- narrow branch crotches with included bark
- wounds (including large pruning wounds)
- wrapped trunks (that hide wounds)

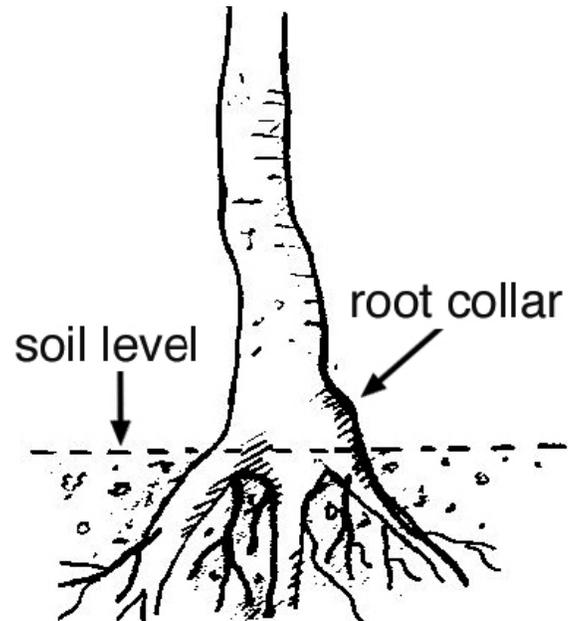
Prepare the Planting Site

Always have your underground utilities marked prior to digging. Don't forget to locate private gas and electrical lines as well. To arrange to have your lines marked call Duke Energy. This service takes a couple of days to set up so be sure to call in advance of your planting date.

Planting Depth is Critical: the most important step in planting a tree is to determine the proper planting depth. The life span of an improperly planted tree planted is significantly shorter than that of a properly planted tree. Often problems related to planting depth show up years, sometimes decades, after the planting date. Trees that are planted too deep may grow slowly and have small, off-color leaves, and experience early fall color and defoliation. Improper planting depth

causes structural problems with the roots that eventually kill the tree. Root problems related to planting depth are often the reason trees blow over in storms or fall over under snow and ice loads.

Improperly planted trees are subject to more disease and/or insect infestations due to the stress caused by being in the ground too deep.



To ensure a healthy, long-lived tree, the root collar must be at or slightly above the existing grade. The root collar is the flared area at the base of the trunk where the first set of larger roots begin to grow out laterally. Finding the collar may mean carefully removing soil from the top of a root ball. You will have to loosen the twine and burlap at the top of balled and burlapped (b&b) plants to find the root collar. Potted plants may be too deep in the pot so the root collar must be located on those plants as well. Once the collar is located, measure the height of the root ball to the collar and dig the hole no deeper than or slightly shallower than that measurement.

A favorable soil environment is important for the survival of newly-planted trees. Dig the planting hole 2-3 times wider than the root ball but no deeper than the ball. The sides should be sloped to make a shallow bowl with rough sides. This provides a wide planting site for roots to expand into the surrounding soil. Avoid digging a straight sided hole with smooth sides as this impedes movement of the roots into the surrounding soil. Do not loosen the soil in the bottom of the hole as this allows the tree to settle, perhaps to a depth that is detrimental to the health of the tree.

Plant with Care

There are slightly different methods for planting b&b, potted or bare root trees

Balled and Burlapped Plants: do not remove the wire basket and burlap before placing the tree in the hole. After the plant is in position, carefully cut away and remove as much of the wire basket as possible. You don't have to do the bottom because roots grow outward, not down. Cut and remove all twine and rope from around the ball. Remove and discard the nails that hold the burlap together and cut exposed burlap away. Do not leave any burlap exposed above the soil surface.

Potted Plants: carefully remove the tree from the container. If you have difficulty removing the pot, slice it up one side and around the bottom to peel the container away. If the soil in the pot will not hold together cut the container away in the planting hole. Check the root system to be sure it is not growing in circles. If it is, make cuts 1 to 1 1/2 inches deep up the four sides of the root ball and cut an X across the bottom of the root ball. This prevents the roots from eventually strangling the plants as the grow.

Bare-root Plants: spread roots so that they radiate outward from the center of the plant. Do not twist the plant into the hole. Remove dead or injured roots by making a clean cut just behind the damage. New roots will branch from this area. Add back fill soil: once the tree or shrub is positioned and straightened, begin back filling with the soil that was removed from the hole. Loosen and break up compacted clumps of soil and discard rocks or debris. This helps eliminate large air pockets where roots will not grow. Amending the back fill soil is no longer recommended as this may inhibit the growth of the root system outside the planting hole. Fill the hole three-quarters full with back fill, lightly pushing the soil around the root ball. Be sure to gently work the soil into the root system of bare root plants. Water the soil to eliminate air pockets and continue to fill in the soil to just below the root collar. Do not tamp the soil down in the hole. Mulch with a thin layer of wood chips or composted material (approximately 2—4 inches deep). Keep the mulch away from the trunk, spreading it evenly over the planting hole. Water the plant after the mulch is in place to avoid eroding the newlyloosened soil.

After-Care: Trees cared for properly when young can provide decades of enjoyment. Keep the planting site free of annuals, weeds, and grass without the use of chemicals. (Any plants growing in the new tree's root-zone compete for valuable moisture and nutrients.) Water at least once a week with a slow trickle. Usually about one-half hour is sufficient. Adjust the watering schedule if it rains or is very hot or dry.

