Tree Planting & Care Tips

Wait until the ground has warmed up in the springtime (don’t plant in cold ground!) The trees come in at the end of March/beginning of April, so it’s possible that the ground might not be ready for planting right away when you pick them up. While planting as soon as possible is better, it of course isn’t going to turn out well if you put them in frozen or cold ground. We can give you advice on how to store them until the ground is warm enough if needed.

Do not plant on hot, dry, windy days, & minimize the exposure of seedlings to air and sunshine as much as possible (studies have shown even 2 minutes of exposure at 73* can result in up to 80% mortality!)

Ensure the hole for planting is deep and wide enough to accommodate the roots comfortably – so they aren’t curved back toward the top or compacted, and plant them deep enough that the “knuckle” between roots and limbs is buried, but do not bury any limbs.

A recent study showed an increase of 25% in regards to survival, and growth was increased by 30%, when trees were watered with just 7 ounces at planting. It is absolutely worth it to take the time to water them at planting.

Pack soil thoroughly around the tree to ensure you don’t leave any air pockets, and if mulching, mulch a good sized area around the tree, but do not mulch right up to the trunk of the tree. Mulches are most effective when placed in a 4 foot diameter circle around each plant, to a depth of about 4 inches. This helps with moisture retention and weed control both.

Maintenance after Planting

Weed control around the planting site is essential for a minimum of 3 years after planting, to help establish the tree or tree row. Mowing, tilling or approved herbicides may be utilized to help with this, but it is very important to help with tree survival.
If you’re planning to install fabric, it should be done within 30 days from the planting of the trees, best results are seen when fabric is installed right after the trees are planted. Fabric should be held down firmly with fabric staples.

If you do lose some trees, replanting within 3 years is highly suggested. If done within three years, little to no size difference is usually noted after 10 years, however if done outside of that three year window, the replants are always smaller and less healthy due to competition with more established trees. We are happy to help you with ordering replants!

Watering is essential to tree survival not only the first year of a planting, but for years afterward, especially with our tendency to have droughty years.

- For a 1 inch caliper tree (meaning trunk is 1 inch across), 7-10 gallons of water a week is required. We generally don’t see that much rain in a summer, let alone a week, so watering is a must.

- As the tree grows, water away from the base, as the roots will be growing outward and it is the tiny little fine roots at the tips that take in the most water anyway, so be sure that the water you are putting on them can be used as efficiently as possible!

Pruning is more important than most people think, and doing it correctly when trees are young can lead to trees that grow in the correct form – which not only adds eye appeal and more enjoyment of them, it strengthens the tree and lengthens its life as well. We have several really good resources on how to prune correctly in the office, just stop in and we can get you a copy!

If you have any questions whatsoever about planting or maintaining your trees, whether you’re planting a belt for livestock protection, or simply planting them to add eye appeal and value to your yard, stop in or give the office a call. If we don’t know the answer, we will keep asking around until we find someone who does. We want to see those trees not just surviving, but thriving!