

PLANTING DIRECTIONS

You have received your tree, and now comes the fun part! Tree planting is a fun activity that the whole family can enjoy, and although it requires a little bit of hard work the payoff is massive and you will go to bed at night proud of your good work. Your tree needs to be planted and watered immediately upon arrival. The sooner the tree gets into the ground, the happier it will be. Before you begin planting your tree, be sure you have had all underground utilities located prior to digging.

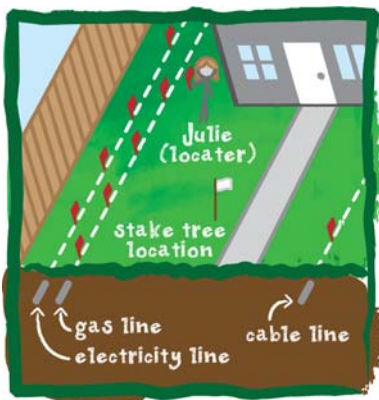
It is important to understand that transporting and transplanting is stressful for trees. In most cases, their root systems have been reduced from their original size. As a result of the trauma caused by the digging and shipping processes, trees commonly exhibit what is known as transplant shock. Transplant shock is indicated by slow growth and reduced vigor following transplanting. If your tree was shipped with leaves, flowers, or fruits already on the tree then it is common, and should be expected, that your tree will lose its leaves, flowers, or fruit during that season. We go out of our way to ship trees as carefully as possible, but a certain amount of wilting, stress, and even foliage loss cannot be avoided.

Proper site preparation before and during planting coupled with good follow-up care reduces the amount of time the plant experiences transplant shock and allows the tree to quickly establish in its new location. Carefully follow these simple steps, and you can significantly reduce the stress placed on the plant at the time of planting.

1. PREPARE FOR YOUR TREE

An iTrees.com representative will call you to let you know when your trees will be arriving. Prior to this, it is a good idea to contact your local underground utility locating service. This service is free in most places, and allows you to have an exact idea where all potential underground conflicts are located. It is best to have your utilities located at least 3 days prior to planting your trees; it usually takes 48 hours for them to mark all of your utilities.

- ♦ In Illinois you must contact J.U.L.I.E for underground utilities location.
↳ <http://www.illinois1call.com/>
- ♦ In the city limits of Chicago you must contact DIGGER.
↳ http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/digger_chicago_utilityalertnetwork.html
- ♦ In Indiana you must contact Indiana 811.
↳ <http://www.indiana811.org/>
- ♦ Wherever you are, you can usually dial 811 to arrange a utility locate.



The iTrees.com delivery crew will place your trees right next to the planting location for you, so you do not have to worry about moving trees around your yard. You must place a stake, flag, or marker in your yard exactly where you plan on planting your tree. It is not a good idea to pre-dig the planting hole for the tree, wait until the tree has arrived so you know the exact size of the root ball. If you are using any soil amendments while planting it is good idea to have this ready, and purchase some mulch for spreading around the base of the tree.



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2. RECEIVE YOUR TREE



The iTrees.com delivery crew will place your trees right next to the planting location for you, so you do not have to worry about moving trees around your yard. You must place a stake, flag, or marker in your yard exactly where you plan on planting your tree. It is a good idea to wait until the tree arrives to dig the planting hole, this way you will be able to see the exact dimensions on the tree's root ball and dig the hole correctly. We will not place the tree in the planting hole for you, only next to the hole. The homeowner will be responsible for digging the planting hole, rolling/placing the tree in the hole, backfilling the soil, and mulching around the tree.

3. DIG A SHALLOW, BROAD PLANTING HOLE



The most common mistake when planting a tree is digging a hole too deep or too narrow. As a general rule, make the hole approximately 1.5 times the diameter of the root mass, but only as deep as the root mass. The tree should be planted no deeper than the soil in which they were originally grown, on balled and burlapped trees, this is at the top of the root ball. On potted trees, this is the top of the soil in the pot. It is important to make the hole wide because the roots on the newly establishing tree must push through surrounding soil in order to establish. On most planting sites in new developments, the existing soils have been compacted and are unsuitable for healthy root growth. Breaking up the soil in a large area around the tree provides the newly emerging roots room to expand into loose soil to hasten establishment. 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. When you have finished digging measure both the hole and the root ball several times to make sure the hole you have dug is the proper width and depth.

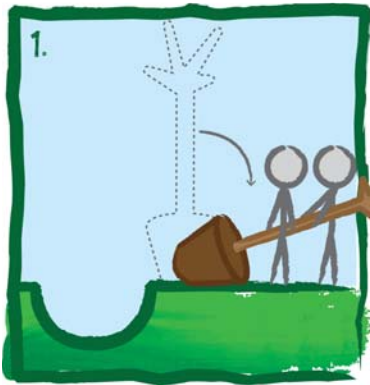
4. DO NOT REMOVE THE BURLAP AROUND THE ROOT BALL

Your balled and burlapped trees will come with burlap and a wire basket surrounding the root mass. **DO NOT** remove either the burlap or the wire mesh. These will both be left on after the tree is planted, and will help hold the root mass together while the tree is pushing out new roots. The metal and the burlap will simply rust and rot away over time; they will not in any way inhibit the growth of the tree. On potted trees you must remove the pot before planting the tree.



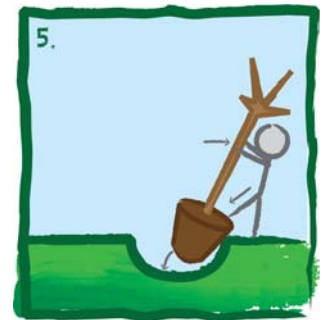
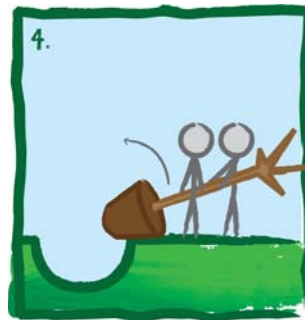
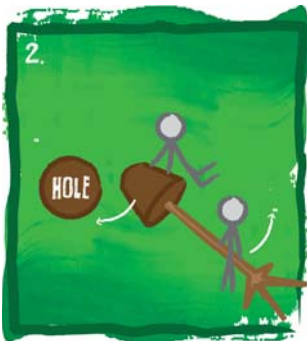
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5. ROLL OR PLACE THE TREE INTO THE HOLE



Before you place the tree into the hole, measure both the hole and the root ball once again to make sure that the hole is the right width and depth. The majority of the roots on the newly planted tree will develop in the top 12 inches of soil. If the tree is planted too deeply, new roots will have difficulty developing because of a lack of oxygen. It is better to plant the tree a little high, than to plant it at or below the original growing level. This planting level will allow for some settling. Also remove any loose dirt from the edges of the hole so that when you roll the tree into the hole it will not drag in any loose dirt. Measure the hole one final time, because once you roll the tree in the hole you will not get it out!

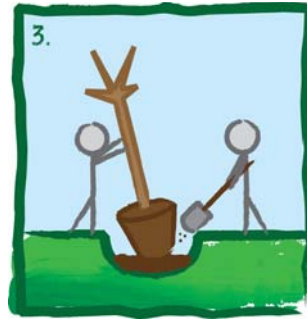
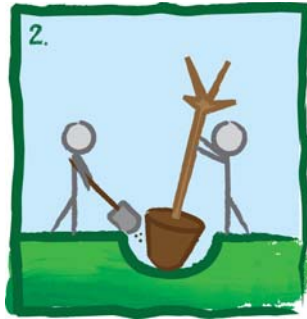
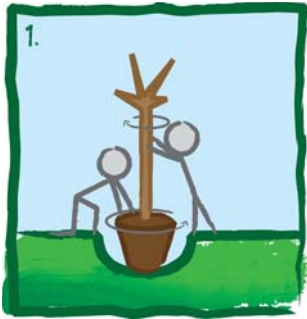
This part requires at least 2 capable adults, or even 3 if possible. Carefully grab the trunk of the tree and pull it down so that the tree is lying on its side. One person should keep hold of the trunk of the tree and “steer” the tree into the hole while another is rolling the root ball. Roll the root ball to the edge of the hole and then the person holding the trunk should rotate the tree until the bottom of the root ball is hanging several inches over the open hole and the rest of the root ball is still resting on the edge of the hole. Have the person that was rolling the root ball grab onto the trunk as well, so both people are now holding onto the trunk of the tree. Slowly begin to pull the trunk of the tree upwards until it is teetering on the edge of the hole. While still holding the trunk place your foot onto the edge of the root ball and gently slide it into the hole.



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6. ORIENT THE TREE

Orient the tree while you have the chance. You can spin the tree by grabbing onto the trunk and rocking it back and forth while one person is spinning the root ball. Spinning a tree can be quite difficult, consider hooking something onto the wire basket and pulling on the root ball to rotate it (you could use a claw hammer, pick axe, or any kind of improvised hook). Situate it so that branches won't be in the way of pedestrian or car traffic. If you prefer a particular side of the tree, turn it toward a prominent viewpoint (such as your kitchen window). Before you begin backfilling, have someone view the tree from several directions to confirm that the tree is straight. Do not be afraid to grab onto the trunk of the tree and pull or rock it in order to get the tree straight, you can also use your shovel as a lever to pry the root ball until the tree is straight. Backfill the hole around the tree and continue to reposition the tree until it is standing straight on its own. Once you begin backfilling, it is difficult to reposition the tree, so try and get it as straight as possible here.



7. CUT THE BURLAP AND TWINE



Now that you have the tree in the ground, and slightly backfilled, it is time to cut the burlap on the top of the root ball. With a sharp knife, cut all the twine that holds the root ball together; make sure to cut all the twine that is wrapped around the trunk of the tree. Cut off the burlap around the top of the root ball so that all you see on the top of the root ball is dirt; you do not need to cut the burlap off of the sides of the root ball, only the top. Stomp or bend down the tabs on the wire basket where the twine was tied so that they are not exposed once the tree is backfilled.



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8. FILL THE HOLE GENTLY BUT FIRMLY



If your native soil is hard to work with (e.g., heavy clay) or retains little moisture (e.g., very sandy), you can treat it to some organic amendment, such as compost. The amendment won't be a permanent solution to soil deficiencies, but it will help retain water and air in the soil around the root ball for the first few vital years. If adding soil amendment, always mix it with soil from the planting site; about one part amendment to three parts native soil is a good proportion for backfill soil. Fill the hole about one-third full and gently but firmly pack the soil around the base of the roots.

Fill the remainder of the hole, taking care to firmly pack soil to eliminate air pockets that may cause roots to dry out. Pack down the soil as you backfill. Using the heel of your foot or the handle end of the shovel, press down firmly to collapse any large air pockets in the soil. This will help stabilize the tree in the hole. Don't wait until the planting is finished; press down every few shovels of soil. Backfill all the way around the edges of the root ball so that the backfilled dirt is level with the top of the root ball. Backfill a little more around the edge to create a berm, which will help hold water and allow for the soil to settle. You do not need to put any extra dirt on top of the root ball, or pile dirt up around the tree trunk. It is not recommended to apply fertilizer at the time of planting.

9. WATER YOUR TREE



Build a watering basin around the root ball by creating a berm a little larger than the root perimeter. This concentrates water to the roots. A tree that has dry roots can stand in a moist backfill without absorbing water. You'll need to water your tree thoroughly after planting with about 15 gallons of water. Monitor your tree's water needs at least once a week for the first month. This will give you an idea as to the frequency your tree will need water growing in your particular soil.

10. MULCH YOUR TREE.

Cover the entire planting area with a 3 to 4-inch layer of mulch, but keep it 2 inches from the base of the trunk. Mulch keeps the topsoil temperate for root growth, reduces surface evaporation of water, slows or stops weed and grass growth around the tree's base, and prevents a hard crust from forming on the soil surface.

11. STAKE THE TREE, IF NECESSARY

Studies have shown that trees establish more quickly and develop stronger trunk and root systems if they are not staked at the time of planting. However, protective staking may be required on sites where windy conditions are concerns. 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 or twine. 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. 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.



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12. PROVIDE FOLLOW UP CARE

Keep the soil moist but not soaked; overwatering causes leaves to turn yellow or fall off. Water trees at least once a week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather. When the soil is dry below the surface of the mulch, it is time to water. Continue until mid-fall, tapering off for lower temperatures that require less-frequent watering. A valuable asset to any landscape, trees provide a long-lasting source of beauty and enjoyment for people of all ages. When questions arise about the care of your tree, be sure to consult your local ISA Certified Arborist or an iTrees.com representative for assistance.

