



Phelan Garden's Tree and Shrub Planting Instructions

INITIAL WATERING

Water container plants thoroughly 30 minutes before removing from container. Balled and burlaped plants should be moist not muddy.

EXCAVATE

Place organic material and soil additives on area to be planted. Dig area 1" less than root depth and at least twice as wide with irregular or jagged sides.

PLANT PLACEMENT

Plastic Containers

Remove plant from pot and cut or tease outside roots apart over entire root ball including bottom. Cut and leave in place any root that is larger than your pinky finger to prevent girdling. **Adjusting Height** Set root ball in hole being sure top of root ball matches surrounding grade. (In clay soils, raise top of root ball 1" to 2" above grade.) Adjust for extra depth of new sod as required i.e. set root ball higher, backfill with mixed soil, water well, add soil to areas that sink.

Peat Pots

Set plant and pot in hole and adjust height (see above). Carefully tear or cut pot rim and tear down and away from root to remove pot sides. Leave bottom of pot under root as it will degrade. Backfill with mixed soils, water well, add soil to any area that sinks.

Balled and Burlap with wire or string or both

Carefully position root ball near or in the hole. Adjust height (see above). Tip rootball to cut bottom wire and wire which cannot be removed after plant placement. Carefully lower into the hole and when positioned correctly, stake tree to prevent shifting. Cut up wire basket and remove basket sides and all burlap and/or strings that secure basket to trunk. Burlap and wire that is under root ball may remain. Do not loosen stem to root ball!

BACKFILL

Mix backfill of organic material and soil additives thoroughly to eliminate layering of different types of soil. Firm soil around bottom to provide stability and carefully make any adjustments to tilt now. Firm soil by hand around root ball—water in—add more backfill if necessary. **Do not stamp backfill with foot.**

WATERING

Saturate root ball and surrounding area thoroughly with water (10 – 15 gallons). Because soils have different water retention characteristics, you may have to water well again in as few as three days or in as many as seven days in clay soil. Plants want to be watered well then allowed to go slightly dry then watered well, etc. **The main cause of plant loss is over or under watering. Winter watering is critical.** During winter, water every three to four weeks on warmer days—10 gallons per 1" diameter of trunk. Water between trunk and canopy line—not close to trunk.

STAKING

Most small trees don't require staking unless you are in a very windy location such as out east. Large trees will require staking to prevent shifting or tilting in the hole. A tree should be staked to provide stability until roots are able to take hold. Typically large trees are staked to reduce chance of tilting which may be difficult to correct.

Position stakes at two or three evenly spaced points around tree. Use grommetted straps to wrap trunk as wire or string used by itself will cut into tree and cause damage. When first planting, snug wires or lines to prevent movement without damaging trunk or bark. After a few weeks, wires or lines should be loosened to allow upper tree trunk to sway up to 2 – 5 inches. This will allow normal root development that eventually will stabilize the tree naturally. Stakes, wires, and straps all should be removed after one year or one growing season. Staking is only temporary support and should not be left in place for extended periods. Inspect straps periodically to expose trunk and ensure no damage has occurred from wires or lines being too tight.

Please call Phelan Gardens at 574-8058 if you have any questions or see any declining health in your tree or shrub.