

Tree planting tips

Nursery stock types

- **Bare root**
 - Trees sold without a soil ball.
 - Least costly nursery stock type.
 - Can only be planted when dormant in the spring. If the bare root tree has already leafed out prior to planting, there is a good chance it will not survive.
 - Keep roots hydrated until planting by using moistened packing material such as shingle toe or sphagnum moss.
 - Bare root Oak, Birch, Hawthorn, and Hackberry need to be [sweated](#) to encourage buds to swell.
- **Balled and Burlapped (B &B)**
 - Grown in a field and harvested with sizable soil ball still intact. The soil ball is wrapped in burlap and secured with twine or wire basket.
 - Usually larger and more costly than other nursery stock types.
 - Due to the size and weight of the tree, special equipment may be needed to transport the tree to the planting site.
 - Can be planted anytime during the planting season.
 - At planting remove all rope or twine and as much of the burlap and wire basket as possible.
- **Potted (also known as containerized)**
 - A bare root tree that was planted in container and grown for less than one season.
 - Similar in appearance to container grown trees, but may have poorly developed root system.
 - Root ball may not stay intact when pulled out of the pot.
- **Container grown**
 - Most common form of nursery stock.
 - Have been growing in the container for more than one growing season resulting in an intact root system less likely to suffer transplant shock.
 - Can be planted anytime in the planting season.
 - More susceptible to stem girdling roots that may compress the stem of the tree.

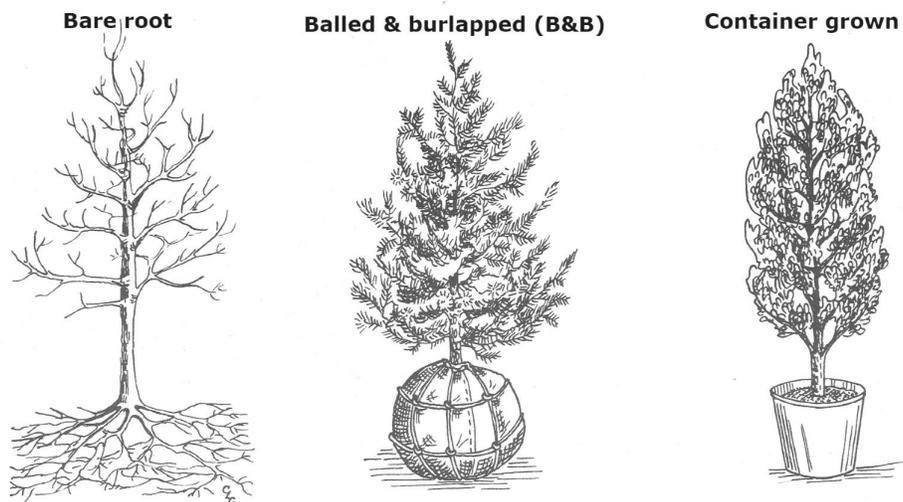


Figure 1 retrieved from University of Maryland Extension

Buying a tree

- Look for a straight trunk with well-spaced branches.
- Inspect the trunk for any wounds or damage, check under the trunk protector if there is one. Don't purchase a damaged tree.
- If possible, remove the root ball from trees in containers and inspect the roots. Roots should not twist or circle the container. Circling roots can be corrected at planting if not severe.
- Consider the mature size of the tree and if it is suitable for the space where it will be planted.

Planting the tree

- Have utilities located prior to planting. This can be done by calling 811 or visiting ndonecall.com and is free of charge.
- If planting on the boulevard, obtain a [boulevard tree planting permit](#) prior to planting.
- Dig a hole about twice as wide as the root ball of the tree. The hole does not need to be very deep. It should allow for the root collar or flare to be just above ground level.
- Place the tree in the hole at proper depth. This may involve removing soil from the top of the root ball to find the root collar.
- Soil may need to be added to the bottom of the hole to ensure the tree isn't planted too deeply.
- Remove any circling roots that are visible on the rootball. Sometimes this may be done by removing about an inch of soil around the rootball, pruning out circling roots if not too large, or teasing them out of the rootball and straightening them out and covering with soil.
- Backfill the hole with the soil that was removed from the hole. Soil amendments and fertilizer are not necessary.
- Staking the tree may be necessary. This requires two stakes placed perpendicular to the prevailing wind. Stakes should be removed after one or two growing seasons.
- Water the tree immediately after planting and staking the tree.
- If the tree has a wrap around the trunk it should be removed to avoid moisture buildup that can encourage insect infestation and disease. Wraps can be placed back on the tree for the winter months for protection from the sun and rodents.

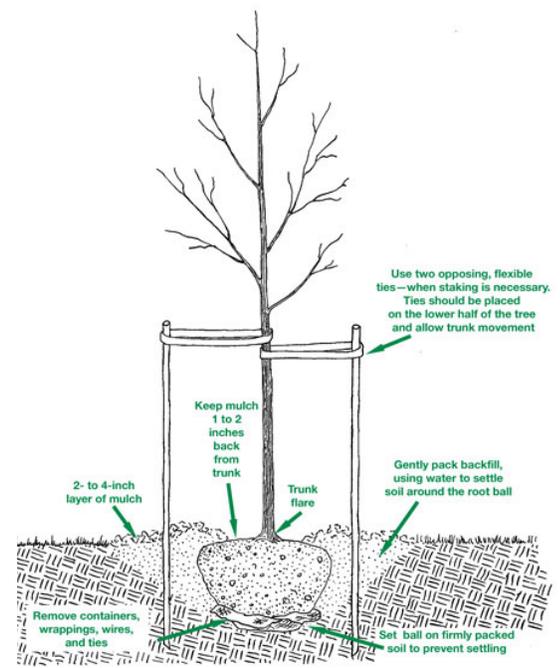


Figure 2 copyright International Society of Arboriculture

Post planting care

- Water twice per week in the first month after planting if the tree has not received additional water from rain or sprinklers.
- Water once per week in the second month after planting and then once every 7 to 10 days thereafter if no additional water has been received from rain or sprinklers.
- If the soil is wet around the tree, it likely does not need water. Overwatering can cause tree death.
- Mulching around the tree is highly recommended. Wood or organic mulch is best and should be 3 to 4 inches deep and 2" from the trunk of the tree. Mulch keeps weeds down, protects the tree from mowers and string trimmers and holds in moisture.