

How to Plant Your Tree

Planting Your Tree

1. Prior to digging, know the area you are planting your tree in. Look around for any obstacles such as power lines, eaves of the house, etc. Many utilities are underground. You **must** call 811 “Call Before You Dig” to have them check your planting area for utility lines.

2. Dig the hole for your tree, digging the planting hole 2-3 times the width and slightly shallower than root ball is in the container. Roughen and slope the sides of the hole removing any glazing of the soil. It is important to measure the tree planting depth and not disturb the soil below where the tree will be planted.

3. Fill the hole with water to check the drainage and to wet the area prior to planting. Dampen (not saturate) the root ball prior to removal of the plant from the container. This will help hold the roots together when planting.

4. Remove the tree from the container. Do not pull the tree out of the container by the trunk. Lay the tree on its side, and gently slide the tree out of the container, handling the tree by the root ball and not the trunk. Check the root ball for circling roots. If required, score the sides and bottom of the root ball to cut and separate roots.

5. Set the tree into the planting hole supporting the tree by the root ball, not carrying it by the trunk. Remove some of the soil next to the trunk, exposing the root collar. Insure proper planting depth by placing an object across the hole to insure the tree is not planted any deeper than the root collar.

6. Backfill the hole keeping the tree perpendicular to the ground. As you are backfilling the hole, add water to the mix. Do not compact the soil in the planting hole. Use only the soil which came from the original planting hole. There is no need to amend the soil. Research has shown there is no advantage to using amendments when planting desert trees. Do not compact the backfilled area.

7. Form a raised area (berm) just outside of the root ball, creating a well for the initial irrigation. Hand water this well several times during the planting process. As the tree grows, expand this “well” to the drip line of the tree. If using drip irrigation, use a minimum of 3 emitters to wet the root ball area. Keep emitters away from the trunk. Increase the number of emitters as the tree grows.

8. Add mulch, adding a 2 to 4 inch layer of mulch around the tree, keeping the mulch away from and off of the trunk. It is recommended to use organic type mulch, not rock type.

9. Even though this is a desert adapted tree, it still requires irrigation. Water the new tree at the time of planting, then every third day for the first week. Change from 3 days, to a 7 day cycle, for the next three weeks. This will help establish the tree. After the 1st month, use a soil probe to determine if watering is needed. Change your watering cycles to reflect the soil conditions and the needs of the tree. Overwatering a desert type tree will result in excessive top growth, and lack of a proper root structure, enabling the tree to be blown over in the wind. Water the tree’s root ball and to the outside to the tree’s drip line (outer most growth of the tree) during each irrigation cycle.

10. Do not fertilize desert trees. Many of the desert trees have the ability to make their own nitrogen. Fertilizing a desert type tree will be a waste of money and resources, and could harm the tree.

Tree Staking and Tree Care

1. Always remove the Nursery stake which comes with your tree.
2. Stake the tree only if the tree cannot stand up by itself. Trees will develop faster without staking. If it is necessary to stake your tree, use two stakes to support the tree. Stake to allow for some movement of the trunk. Remove before one year. Use a soft material for tying off the tree, not wire or a hard material which can abrade the bark off of the tree. Loosen the ties as the tree grows, as not to girdle or cut into the tree.
3. When planting, do not prune your tree for the 1st year except to remove damaged branches or water sprouts. Allow the small branches to remain on the tree, especially at the lower area of the tree. Leaving the small branches on helps to promote trunk growth, taper and strength.



This information supplied in cooperation with the University of Arizona, Mohave County Extension, Master Gardeners. You can contact the Master Gardeners at 928-753-3788 or email at Mohave@ag.arizona.edu

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