

Planting Balled and Burlapped (B&B) Trees

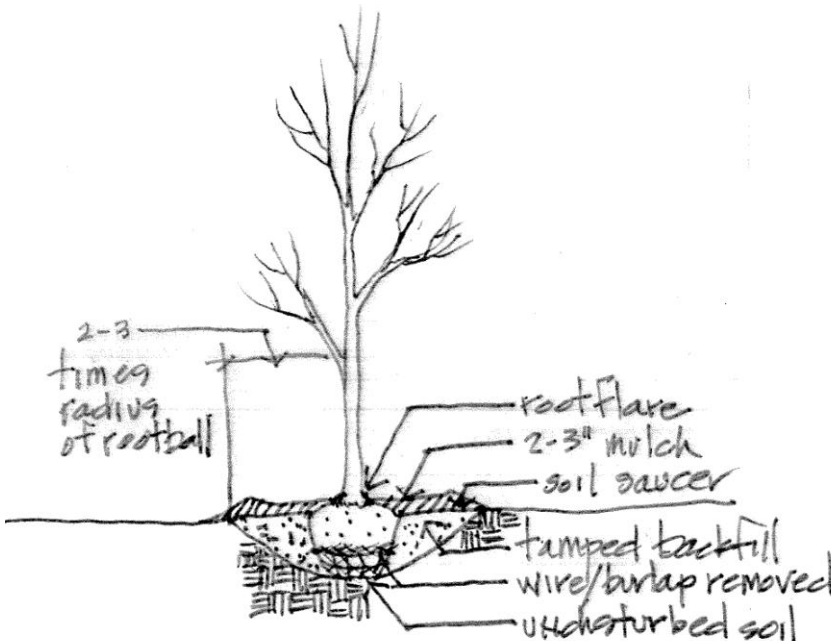
Have the following items handy to make the planting of your tree go smoothly.

- Planting instructions
- Round-point shovel
- Work gloves
- Wire cutters to cut wire basket on root ball
- Pruning shears to remove any old roots found in the planting hole
- Tarp to place dug up soil on and keep the area clean
- Stiff-tined rake to clean up area
- Water
- Mulch, preferably shredded hardwood



Prepare the hole for planting

First remove any turf from the top of the hole and set aside for disposal so that it won't compete with the tree for water. The hole for the tree should be only as deep as the depth from the root flare to the bottom of the tree ball. The width should be two to three times as wide as the root ball. Better to plant the tree too high than too deep.



Setting the tree properly

To find the root flare it may be necessary to loosen the top of the burlap from the base of the tree trunk and gently scrape some soil from the top of the ball to determine if the root flare has extra soil over it. Repeated cultivation in the field where it was grown may pile soil around the trunk. Scrape away any extra soil to determine where the original soil surface level was.

Now it is time to maneuver the tree into the hole. Handle the tree only by the root ball, never by the trunk of the tree, which may loosen the soil around the roots. Lay your shovel handle across the hole to see where the root flare meets the handle and adjust the planting depth. If you suspect the tree may settle after planting, plant it a little high. Again, it is better to plant the tree too high than too deep.

When you have determined that the tree is at an appropriate depth, adjust the tree in the hole so that it is plumb from all angles, placing a small bit of soil at the base of the ball to hold it in place. Once the tree is plumb and secured, cut and remove 1/2 of the wire basket, if it came with one. Next, remove the burlap from the top 1/2 of the root ball and discard the material. If synthetic burlap has been used try to remove all of it. Be careful not to disturb the soil around the roots.

Root flare correctly placed above soil



Backfilling

Start backfilling the hole with the native soil that was removed. Fill the hole about half way, tamping the soil and watering, repeating until the hole is filled. Create a saucer with the soil at the outer edges of the root ball. This will help concentrate the water over the roots. Do not place any soil against the trunk of the tree and be sure the root flare is still visible above the soil.

Mulching

Mulch the entire area with shredded bark mulch 2-3 inches deep. Keep the mulch away from the trunk of the tree to prevent possible fungal growth.

Watering

Water your tree every two to three days to prevent the roots from drying out. Putting a hose over the root ball and turning it to a slow trickle for an hour will ensure that the root ball gets thoroughly watered. Ideally your tree should receive an inch of water per week. If nature doesn't provide, then supplementary watering is necessary.

Staking

Staking should not be required unless your tree is in a high wind location, or the root mass is too small to support the tree. If staking is called for contact the city arborist to come stake your tree.

Initial maintenance

Keep the mulch to a depth of 2-3 inches. If there is a rodent guard on the tree check it monthly to be sure it isn't too tight around the tree. Remove it if it is. If staking is necessary be sure that the wires around the tree are protected with a piece of hose and after one to two years remove it.

Contacts for Help

If you should run into any questionable circumstances please call one of the Urban Forestry Project Volunteer "hotshots" for help at one of the following numbers:

Rick Fenton 421-7098
Tom Denny 321-5681



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