

# TREE PLANTING GUIDE

## WATERING Newly Planted Trees.

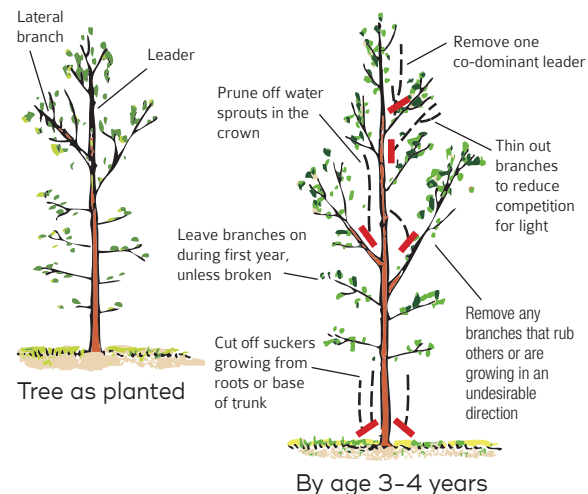
### Watering Trees During First Two Years:

During the first couple growing seasons, your newly planted tree is expending a lot of energy trying to get its roots established in the soil. Especially during the first few summers of your new tree's life, it will have a difficult time dealing with heat and drought. You can make this easier by providing water and covering the soil with wood-chip mulch. Deep watering, keeping the soil moist to a depth that includes all the roots, can help speed the root establishment.

As a rule of thumb, your soil should be moist. Usually 30 seconds with a steady stream of water from a garden hose with a diffuser nozzle per tree seedling is sufficient.

## HOW TO PRUNE Young Shade Trees

- 1 Prune early in the tree's life so pruning wounds are small, but do not start until the third year or so. A new transplant needs its leaves to produce new growth.
- 2 Identify the best leader and lateral branches before you begin pruning and remove any defective parts before pruning to form.
- 3 Keep your pruning tools sharp. One-hand pruning shears with curved blades work best on young trees.



## DORMANT TREES: Yes, they're alive!

Your trees are in the process of growing dormant. They are alive but not actively growing.

When you receive your trees, deciduous trees may have some leaves that will be changing color due to dormancy; evergreens may have a few yellow needles from winter cold.

A tiny scratch in the bark will reveal a living layer of green – your assurance that the plants are still very much alive even though they are “asleep.”



**A tiny scratch in the bark reveals a green cambium layer — which indicates this dormant tree is very much alive.**



# PRE-PLANTING CHECKLIST

- 1

Please Inspect Your Trees: Upon arrival, please ensure there was no damage during shipping. Your trees are in the process of growing dormant, meaning they are alive but not actively growing. You will see a few leaves, but they will be changing color in this process. Please be assured your trees are very much alive. They will leaf out in the spring.
- 2

Call 811: “Call Before You Dig” to notify of your planting. This service will mark your underground utility lines for free. They will typically mark your lines in a 48- to 72-hour window. While you wait, store the trees in a cool place and keep the soil moist.
- 3

Choose Your Planting Location: Consider what the tree’s height, crown spread, shape, and root space will be at maturity so you can avoid future problems such as growing into power lines or encroaching on your neighbor. Think about the purpose of the tree: Are you planting it for shade, aesthetics, or as a windbreak or screen? Visit [arborday.org/righttree](http://arborday.org/righttree) for helpful tips on selecting the best location for your tree.



# PLANTING YOUR TREES

What you do to your tree in the first few years of life will affect its shape, strength, and even how long it will live. The following tips and techniques will help you get the most value out of your tree by making sure it will thrive.

The keys to this are:

- Proper planting
- Watering
- Mulching
- Proper pruning

It’s best to plant your trees immediately. If you can’t plant because of weather or soil conditions, store the trees in a cool place like a refrigerator or basement.

- 1

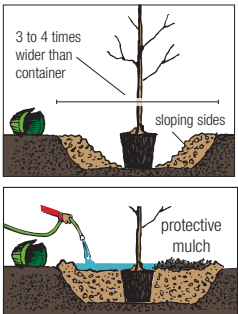
Dig a hole the same depth of the container and three to four times wider with sloping sides.
- 2

Lay the container on its side and carefully remove the tree by tapping the outside of the container to loosen the trees roots and allow for easier removal. Try to keep the soil around the roots intact.



- 3

Containerized trees can become root-bound, a condition where a tree’s roots have grown to the edge of the container and have started to tangle. To correct this problem, cut an “X” across the bottom of the rootball and make four vertical slices on the sides of the rootball.



- 4

Set the tree in the middle of the hole. Make sure to adjust the height of the tree so that the root flare (the swollen area as the trunk meets the soil) sits at ground level. Then fill and firmly pack the hole with the original soil. Keep filling the hole until the soil is at ground level. Do not add any soil amendments or fertilizer.
- 5

Create a water-holding basin (as pictured at left), and water generously.

# ADD MULCH AROUND YOUR TREE

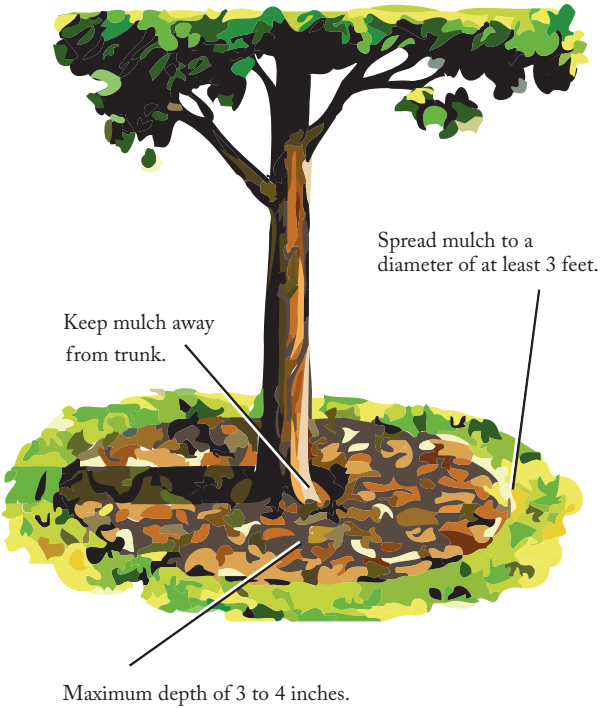
A young tree’s best friend, mulch insulates soil, retains moisture, keeps out weeds, prevents soil compaction, reduces lawn mower damage, and adds an aesthetic touch.

- 1

Add mulch to the base of your tree by removing any grass within a 3-foot area depending on the size of your tree.
- 2

Pour natural mulch such as wood chips or bark pieces 2 to 4 inches deep within the circle.
- 3

Keep the mulch from touching the trunk of the tree.



For step-by-step videos and more planting info, go to [arborday.org/HowToPlant](http://arborday.org/HowToPlant)

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