

Planting Guidelines for Symphony Village Trees

Rev C

Document: Tree Planting Guide / Symphony Village Tree Committee

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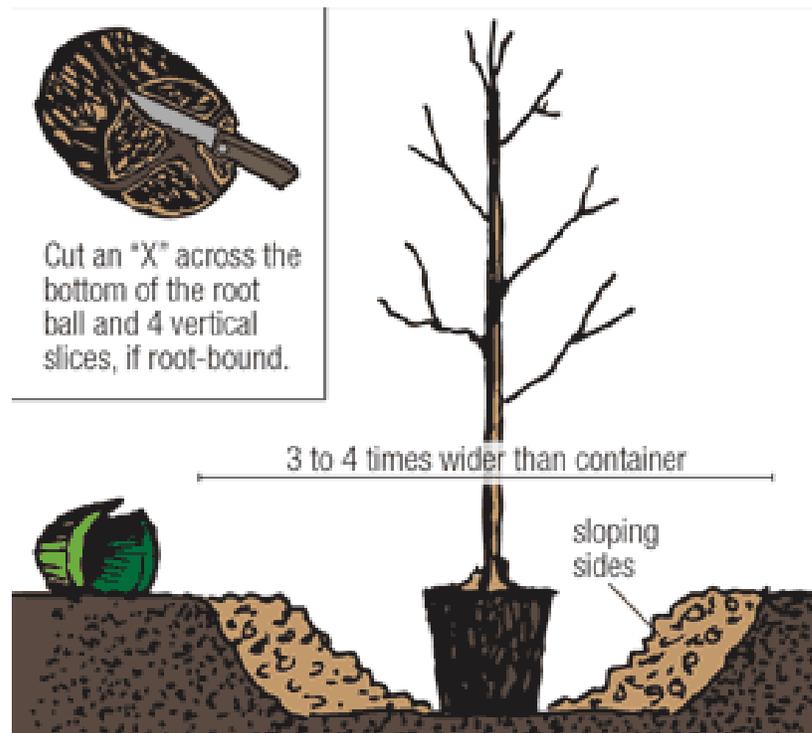
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Instructions

1. Dig a wide, rough-sided hole, 3 to 4 times wider than the tree ball, especially at the soil surface. Square-shaped holes also work. Score the sides of the hole. The idea is to have well-aerated soil around the new root ball to prevent the roots from circling in the hole (which would eventually kill the tree).
2. Whether the tree is from bare rootstock, a container plant, or a balled or burlapped tree, you need to find the root flare*. The soil may need to be brushed away to locate it. In small trees, the root flare will be small, but noticeable.

* Root Flare: The root flare is the portion of the tree where the trunk widens at the base as it transitions to the root system. This flare occurs at the natural grade of the soil. It is of critical importance that this level be maintained.

For balled or burlapped trees, ensure the tree is not root-bound by cutting an 'x' shape across the bottom of the root ball and if root bound cut four vertical slices as pictured below.



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3. If the soil ball is planted so its top is at the soil surface, the root flare will be planted too deep and the tree will show damage after a few years. The root flare should be slightly exposed after the hole has been filled with soil. The root flare should be at grade level or no more 1'-2" higher than at grade level. By exposing the flare, the roots should grow outward as they were intended and the amount of time needed to anchor and establish itself in the soil will be decreased. The bottom of the root ball should be sitting on firm undisturbed soil. If the hole is too deep and soil has to be put back under the ball, the tree can settle and the tree will be planted too deep. Therefore, if fill dirt under the ball is unavoidable, tamp the added soil to compact it before planting. If the tree is set too low creating an inward cupping water will fill around the tree and over time will negatively affect its health. It's best to set trees slightly higher than ground grade to allow for settling and/or being planted too low. However, trees set too high can also create a problem for their roots and eventually affect the trees health long after the warranty has ended.
4. After digging the hole and before the tree is planted, fill the hole with water and wait until the next day (if the water has not drained away). If the water level does not substantially drain overnight, a drainage problem may exist that eventually will negatively affect trees. If planting more than a few trees, within the same vicinity, use an adequate number of sample holes to perform this percolation test. If necessary, take remedial action to improve the drainage and plant the tree slightly higher in the bed.
5. When planting trees with a wire basket and/or burlap root balls, the burlap shall be removed such that a minimum of 1/3 of the root ball will be exposed and the wire basket will be removed entirely. Inspect roots for excessive circling and adjust them such that roots are encouraged to grow away from the root ball and trunk (see paragraph 2). No burlap should be visible above the soil once the planting hole has been filled.

Important: Remove any nylon or plastic covering since these materials do not decompose and can girdle the trunk and roots as the plant grows. Wire baskets whose mesh is less than 4" shall be completely removed after placing the root ball in the hole.

6. If adding soil conditioners or fertilizers (10-10-10) follow the manufacturer's instructions. Most of the backfilled soil should be the original. If the original soil is too compacted it should be loosened before backfilling and mixed with soil conditioners such as leafgro or mushroom soil. The "new" soil should always contain mostly original soil to encourage roots to expand into the adjacent original soil.
7. After planting, shape the soil to create a shallow depression one third larger than the diameter of the root ball with a slightly raised berm around the periphery.
8. Staking and guying (tensioned cabling designed to add stability) is usually unnecessary if the tree has been planted properly with the earth ball size of at least 9" of ball for each 1" of trunk diameter.

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Important: Due to strong winds in the Symphony Village community staking is recommended. Staking should be accomplished with guy wires that will not cut or constrict the trunk. All trees should be periodically checked the first year ----- if the tree is loose it should be tightened. The tree should not be loose after one growing season. The staking should be removed no later than one growing season after planting.

9. The tree bed should be watered to ensure the soil compacts around the roots. If it is necessary to add more soil be careful not to add any around the root flare. Do not tamp the soil or air pockets will form and roots will be killed.

Street Tree Beds

1. The street tree bed should extend from the sidewalk's roadside edge to the curb's inside edge and its length should be 10 feet. The tree should be planted in the center of the bed. Other than the hole for the planting, the bed's soil should be loosened to a depth of 10"-12" inches. Slope the soil downward such that it is 3 inches below the curb/sidewalk levels. After planting, shape the soil to create a shallow depression one third larger than the diameter of the root ball with a slightly raised berm around the periphery. Mulch the top of the ball (the root flare should still be visible) and bed with 1-2" of mulch. Start the mulch 3" from the tree trunk/root flare tapering outward to a depth of 2 inches at the tree bed's edge or roughly 1 " below the curb or sidewalk.

Common Tree Beds

Common tree beds should be no smaller than 3-4 feet diameter. Other than the hole for the planting the bed's soil should be loosened to a depth of 10"-12" inches. Mulch the top of the ball and bed (the root flare should still be visible) after planting with 1" of compost and then mulch starting 3" from the tree trunk tapering outward to a depth of 3 inches at the tree bed's edge. Do not mulch closer than 3 inches from the trunk.