

THE TREE PLANTING SEASON IS UPON US

Trees add height, colour and architectural interest to a garden and, if planted properly, can provide many years of enjoyment. Now is the ideal time to plant trees so their roots can become established before the leaves re-emerge in spring.

Although trees generally provide most interest in the warmer months of the year, their fruits, coloured leaves and attractive bark can extend their period of interest throughout the autumn and winter.

Planting a tree and ensuring it is well looked after is easy to do and requires relatively few tools. Most specimens are not cheap to buy but younger, smaller trees are less expensive and easier to stake than older, larger ones. They also become established more quickly.

To ensure a new tree has the best possible start in life it pays to plant it correctly. The technique for planting shown here can be applied to fruit and ornamental trees.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TREE FOR YOUR GARDEN

Size is probably the most crucial factor in determining which tree is suitable for you. Consider how the tree fits the space as it becomes mature.

Will you need to prune the tree?

If you have to prune to contain and restrict its size then this may be the wrong choice.

What do you want from your tree:- colour, shade, screening to name but a few.

Think of the tree's situation in relation to structures, building, walls etc.

Consider habit, upright or spreading, rounded or pointed, weeping or natural.

What types/species trees will be suitable for your ground conditions such as soil type, acid or alkali, heavy clay or light shady loam. Most of the district consists of medium clay soil or peat on the coastal plains.

Will the tree be exposed to strong winds or protected by buildings and other trees.

The above pointers may make it sound complex but as most experienced gardeners will tell you they don't get it right all the time.

There can be immense satisfaction in choosing the right tree and enabling it to grow and survive.

BUYING TREES



Bare root — Obtained from garden centres, nurseries or by mail order. Plant between October and March.



Container grown — More expensive than bare root but can be planted all year round with success. Beware of trees left too long in small containers. Planting in hot dry spells should be avoided.



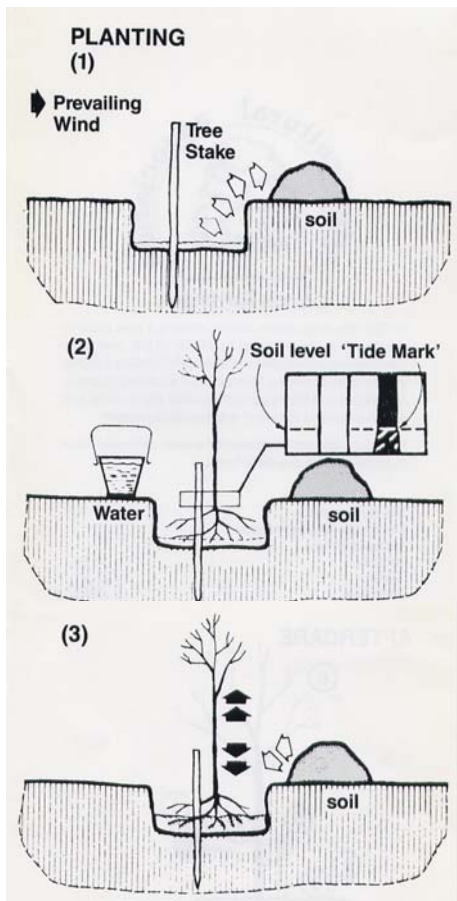
Root balled — Generally used for evergreens. Root ball should not be disturbed during planting.

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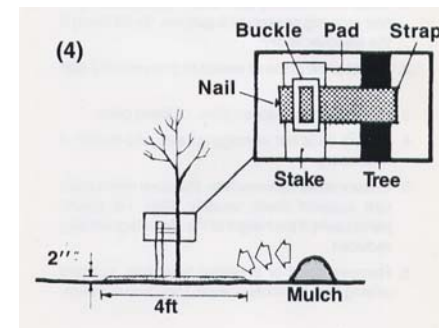
Trees should not be planted when the soil is frozen or waterlogged. If you have obtained trees during these conditions do not unwrap the roots. Place trees in a cool frost free shed for a day or two, or temporarily cover the roots with peat. When ‘heeled in’ like this, trees can be safely held for two or three weeks. Take care to ensure that the roots remain moist at all times and do not allow to dry out.

PLANTING

- 1) Dig a hole large enough to accommodate roots. Break up bottom of hole. If a stake is required drive in until firm. Most evergreens and container grown trees will not require a stake. A stake which projects 3 feet (1m) from ground level is adequate for most deciduous trees.
- 2) Unwrap roots. Soak in water. Place tree in hole and spread out roots. Ensure ‘tide-mark’ on stem is at ground level. If the roots of the container tree are found to be growing in circles the should be spread out or cut.
- 3) Mix 2oz (50g) bonemeal with topsoil. Backfill carefully around the roots, firming soil at 6" (15cm) intervals. Alternatively work well rotted manure into the bottom. Gently shake tree to ensure soil is in contact with roots.

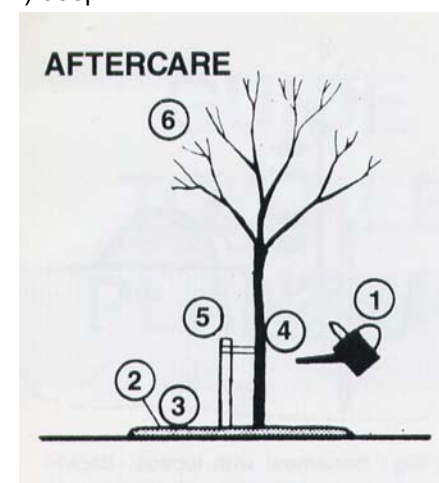


- 4) Firm soil well at final level. Gently pull tree to ensure it is secure. Attach tree to stake with tree tie. The tie should be at the top of the stake. Spread mulch of coarse bark, gravel or mulching mat around base of tree.



AFTERCARE

1. Water immediately after planting and weekly in the first growing season (2-5 gallons, 10-20 litres) if the weather is dry.
2. Do not allow grass or weeds to grow within 2ft (60cm) of stem.
3. Maintain mulch about 2ins. (50mm) deep.
4. Ensure tie is not damaging stem and loosen if necessary.
5. Ensure stake remains firm. Remove when stem can support itself, usually after 1-3 years, particularly if the height of the stake is gradually reduced.
6. Remove dead or crossing branches, suckers arising from roots or weak shoots on the stem.



With acknowledgement to the Arboricultural Association. www.trees.org.uk