



Proper Planting

When?

Generally anytime the ground is not frozen or too wet. Perennials should be planted before winter to avoid soil heaving.

Soil Preparation

By far your best landscape investment. *Will anything grow in this horrible clay??* **Absolutely yes!** (but we may want prep the soil before we plant-like cleaning before you paint)! Find out what your soil need. Have your soil tested. This could be a very important test depending on the plant's needs. What does a soil test tell you? Go to <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1132.html>

The Right Way To Dig a Hole (seriously!)

These instructions assume installing a single plant. The best way to prepare for installing multiple plants in a bed is to till the entire area.

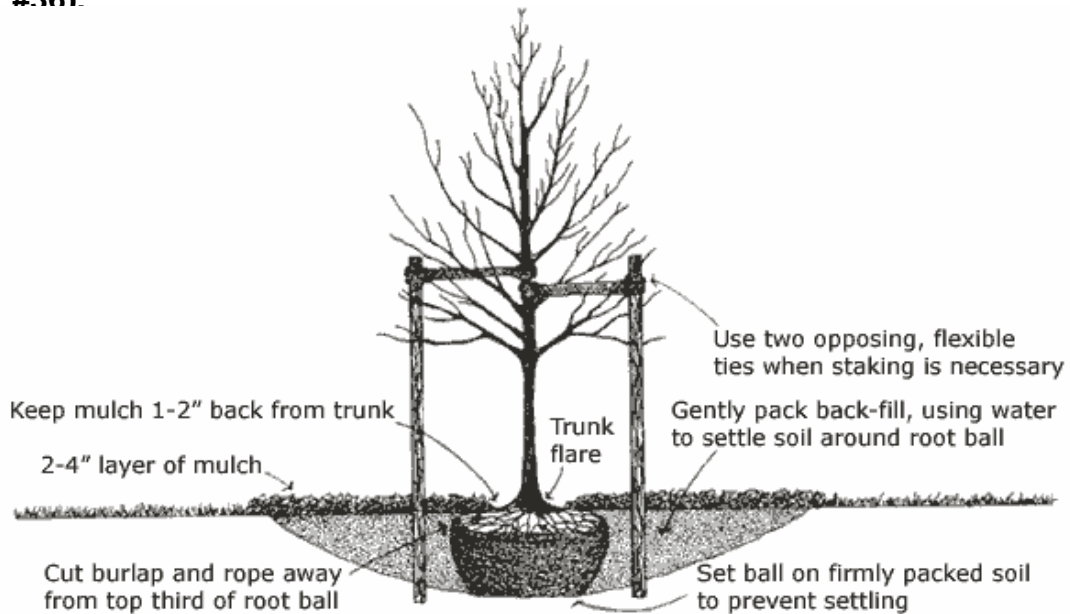
1. Measure the rootball.
2. For trees, find the first lateral root. It should be at or just below the soil line-NO DEEPER! Deep planting is a major cause of plant stress.
3. Mark the best side of the plant with a ribbon/string so you exactly how to place it in the hole.
3. Dig the hole at least twice as wide (the wider the better) but 2" shallower than the dimensions of the rootball. Yes, a little of the rootball will stick up from the surrounding soil.
4. Unless your soil contains rocks or non-soil items chop it up so all clods are no larger than a golf ball. Save it for backfill.
5. Do not put granular fertilizer into the hole. This could damage roots. For a jump start use liquid root stimulator.
6. Cut burlap from top 1/3 of rootball above wire cage. Leave wire cage intact. For container plants make several vertical slices on sides of rootball. Spread out roots in hole. Do not "tuck" roots to make them fit in the hole. Make the hole larger or cut off excess root length. This pruning will promote further root growth.
7. Mix organic matter into your native backfill soil (from step 4.) Total backfill mixture should contain no more than 20% of a good amendment – mushroom compost and/or pine soil conditioner. Example: a 15" deep hold should have about 3" of amendment incorporated into the backfill. Do not over-amend. Too much of a good thing leads to problems. Do not mix only sand with clay soil. This results in a concrete-like combination.
8. Backfill the hole with the soil mixture in step 7.

9. Water thoroughly to settle.

10. Mulch no deeper than 2". Keep mulch away from trunk.

11. Follow proper watering practices. Newly planted trees should be kept moist (not saturated) (Separate Handout #36).

*Tree staking is generally not recommended unless the tree is located in a particularly windy site or is loose when planted.



Reference Sources:

Clemson University Extension, Ohio State University Extension, Purdue University Extension, City of Albany, Oregon, American Nursery Standards Institute, Univ. Of Minnesota.

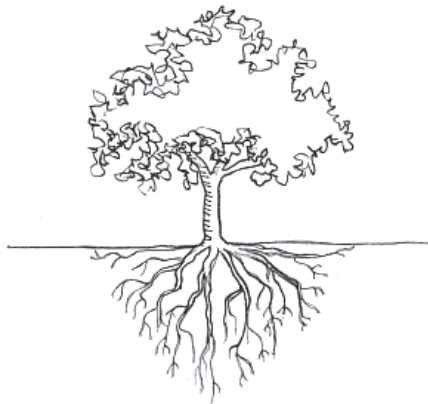


Figure 1a. Most people's imagined configuration of tree roots - sort of a mirror image of the above trunk and branch system - which is quite deep and stops just outside the canopy drip line.

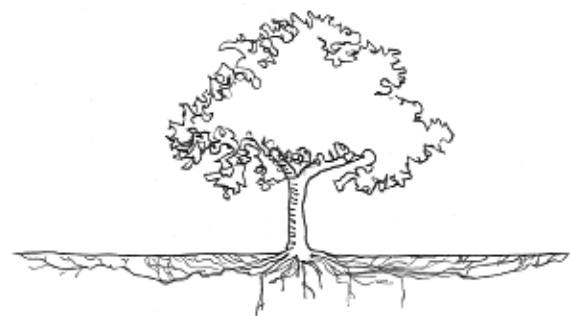


Figure 1b. A more realistic view of a tree's roots. Most roots are relatively shallow (three feet or less deep) with most roots within 12 inches of the surface. Roots extend well past the canopy drip line.