

TREE PLANTING

Best dates to plant are March 15 to June 15 and September 1 to October 15.

Digging the Hole

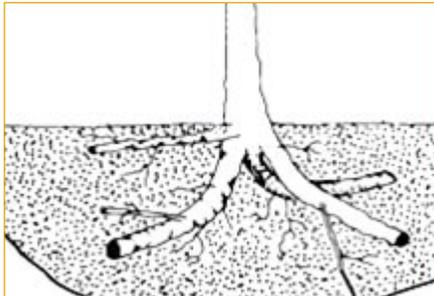
Call 811, Before You Dig, to locate underground facilities.

An excellent link on the Science of Planting a Tree is

<http://cmg.colostate.edu/gardennotes/633.pdf>

The size of the hole is critical for your tree's success. If the hole is too narrow, root growth is hindered. Planting depth is also critical, so dig the hole twice as wide with sloping sides and about 2-4" shorter than the root ball. Prepare the back fill soil by mixing with an organic soil amendment in a ratio of two parts of original soil to one part organic amendment. Remove any burlap, twine or wire and lift the tree by the root ball as you place it in the hole. The top of the root ball should be about 1-2" above the existing grade. The trunk flare should sit slightly above ground. The top roots should be covered with 1-2" of soil. Back fill the hole with the amended soil and water as you backfill the hole to remove air pockets and firmly set the tree. Also tamp the soil gently to eliminate air pockets. As you water, you may need to add more soil.

Root Collar Location



"Illustrations by Edward F. Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS, University of Florida."

Nicely positioned root collar



"Photos by Edward F. Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS, University of Florida."

A Tree Planting schematic diagram is at **www.erieco.gov/document_center/view/141**

For more in-depth information with specifics on bare root and balled trees, seedlings, and different planting sites, see the Science of Planting a Tree link above.



Mulching

A mulch ring around the tree helps protect roots, holds moisture and protects the tree from lawn mowers. Mulch should be 2-4" deep with a space of 1-2" between trunk and mulch. Most of the tree's absorbing roots are in the top twelve inches of soil, so as a new tree is establishing its root system, growth is faster if roots are not competing with grass.

For more information on mulching see the link, Tree Maintenance, at **www.erieco.gov/treeboard**

Staking Trees

Plan to stake your tree the first year with the trunk able to move slightly. Straps are effective for staking to poles. Visit the Tree Planting schematic which contains diagrams for planting and staking at **www.erieco.gov/treeboard**

Damage can be caused when a tree is left staked and strapped too long. Generally, deciduous trees are staked for 1 year, evergreen trees are staked for 2 years. Trees that are staked too long don't develop stout trunks and strong root systems.

Watering

In the first 2-3 years, water is critical for root growth. New trees need supplemental water and a general rule of thumb is 1" of water every 5-7 days, or 10 gallons of water for each diameter inch of the tree trunk. For example, a two-inch diameter tree will need 20 gallons every 5-7 days. An easy way to measure is to poke a few holes in a 5 gallon bucket and place the bucket to drip within the tree line. Newly planted trees should be watered every 3-5 days during growing season. They also need water at least once a month in dry winter months.

Fertilization

Fertilization is not needed or encouraged at time of planting. It encourages top growth and slows root growth. Wait at least 2 years before considering fertilizer.

