

Caring for a New Tree

Watering

It is important to thoroughly water a tree at the time of planting with approximately 20-25 gallons of water. Continue to water your tree, until established, once or twice a week for a total of 15-25 gallons per week; if the tree is receiving an inch or more of rain, then watering is not necessary. Stop watering in the fall once the ground freezes and the tree goes dormant. To assist with watering, there are many types of watering devices you can use. Below are a couple examples:



Watering Ring (Left), Watering Bag (Right)

Mulching

Mulch is used to help hold water and act as protection from lawn care machinery for newly planted trees. To properly mulch, lay mulch around the tree in a donut shape, 6 inches or more away from the stem and roughly 2-4 inches deep at the widest point. Keep the mulch off of the tree trunk to prevent stem girdling roots from forming. See photos of properly mulching below:

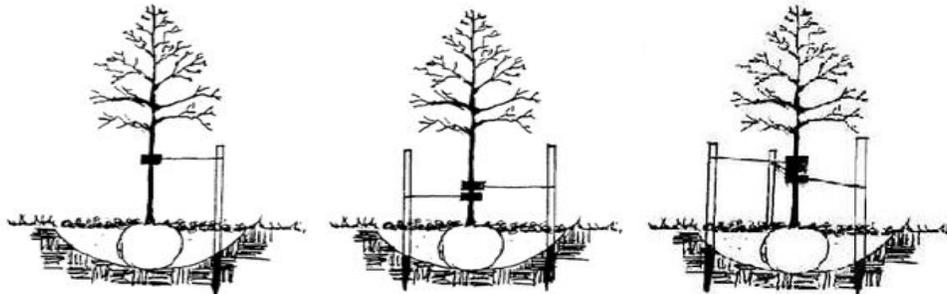


Properly Mulched Tree (Left), Improperly Mulched Tree (Right)

Staking

Staking a tree is only necessary if the tree is prone to leaning or falling. Typically, bare root trees are the first to need staking because they do not have as solid of a root ball as containerized trees have. If you need to stake your tree, limit the number of stakes used and only keep them on the tree for one growing season, unless it's necessary to keep on longer (windy sites, loose soil, etc.)

When staking, your first attachment and stake should be placed on the windward side of the tree to counter push from the wind. If a second stake is needed, place the second one on the leeward side of the tree to counter movement back and forth. If more support is needed, a three-stake system can be utilized; this is typically a very special case or a tree that may need 'holigan protection. Attachments should be two-thirds of the distance from the ground to the first branch and stakes should be driven deep into the ground for stability. It is best to use wide materials such as canvas burlap or an old bicycle inner tube to loosely attach the states to the tree as this allows the tree to move slightly without damaging the bark.



One-Stake (left), Two-Stake (Center), and Three-Stake System (Right)

Stem Protection

Stem protection is useful if you are experiencing critter damage on the tree or if you know this will be an issue. You want stem protection to cover the main stem of the tree without touching the stem and making a cozy home for insects. Make sure the stem protection is on your tree by early to late fall and removed promptly in the spring. Usually shrubs don't need protection, but fencing around the shrub can prevent rabbit and vole damage.



Wire Stem Protection (left), Plastic Stem Protection (right)