



GUILFORD GARDEN CENTER

Where gardening is fun!

Optional Shrub & Tree Warranty & Planting Instructions

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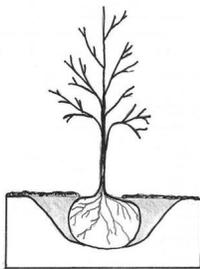
New! Activate a 1-year warranty by starting your plants off right –

- By using our **Planting Mix & Compost Blend** along with our recommended **Fertilizer**, your shrubs will have exactly what they need to thrive. (Exceptions: Aucuba, Gardenias, Rhododendron, and Roses will need soil conditioner instead of the planting mix.)
- Add our **Tree Watering System** to those items, and your tree will be automatically watered! **Tree Stakes** are also available for complete new tree care.
- Involve us early if problems still develop! We can often diagnose and help correct issues.

Planting Woody Ornamentals (adapted from the NC Extension Master Gardener Handbook):

Water plants thoroughly before transplanting. For smaller plants, remove each plant from its container by turning the plant upside down and giving the top edge of the container a sharp rap. Catch the root ball as it slips from the container. For larger plants, turn each plant on its side and gently press on the container; then holding on to the base of the plant, gently slip the root ball out of the container. Always pick the plant up by the root ball, never by the trunk or stem as it could split or break.

Careful attention to proper planting techniques prevents future problems.



Dig the hole: An ideal planting hole is only as deep as the root ball and at least two to three times wider, with roughened sides sloping in toward the bottom. Plants like Gardenias, Roses, and Rhododendron will benefit from Soil Conditioner or even Mini-Nuggets mixed in to the soil in the planting hole, for drainage.

Loosened soil below the root ball can settle, resulting in the plant being too deep. If the hole is dug too deep, firm the bottom of the hole to reduce settling. Because most new roots grow horizontally from the side of the root ball, soil firmed at the bottom of the hole does not substantially affect root growth. In many urban soils, root growth from the bottom of the root ball is limited by inadequate aeration and excessive moisture.

Position the plant. Carefully place the plant in the hole. For Balled & Burlapped trees gently roll them into the hole. Position the plant so it is straight, and the “best side” faces out. **Make sure to plant at or slightly above grade.** If your soil is very poorly drained, create a small mound (about 6” in height) in the middle of the hole and set the root ball on this mound. This allows water to collect beneath the roots.

Attend to the roots. For B&B trees, remove any twine wrapped around base of trunk. Remove the top 1/3 to 1/2 of the wire basket using wire cutters. Pull the burlap down away from the top of the ball and

cut off. For container-grown trees, use a shovel to shave off roots around edge and bottom of root ball. Slice down into root ball in a radial manner.

Refill the hole. Loosen and break up any clods in the excavated soil before backfilling because clods can create air pockets around the root ball. (Amend the soil to 50% planting mix/compost blend.) Fill the planting hole about halfway and then water-in. Finish adding soil to the hole so it is level with the surrounding grade. Chop the soil in hole with the end of a shovel to minimize air pockets taking care not to chop the roots. **Do not tamp the soil too firmly**, as this will compact the soil making it harder for growing roots to penetrate.

Mulch. Apply 2 inches to 3 inches of organic mulch in an area that extends to several inches beyond the plant canopy. Keep mulch at least 6 inches away from the trunk or crown of the plant to improve air circulation and discourage insect and mammal activity. The root zone of trees and shrubs grows to extend beyond the drip line—two to three times the distance between the trunk and the edge of the canopy. Increase the mulch zone outward as plants mature to continue to protect the roots. The mulch helps to maintain moisture and reduce fluctuations in soil temperature. Mulch inhibits weeds and breaks down over time, improving the soil.

Staking Trees and Shrubs

In some situations, staking can provide stability to the roots and trunk of a tree while allowing it to develop a healthy root system, strong trunk, and strong branches. Avoid staking trees and shrubs if possible as it is a labor-intensive, costly procedure that can easily do more harm than good. Most plants less than 6 feet tall with less than a 1-inch trunk do not need to be staked. As nursery stock gets larger, the root ball may not be large enough to keep the stem from tipping once planted. Environmental factors at the planting site—such as wind exposure, topography, surrounding plantings, and soil conditions—also play a role in the decision to stake. Plant and observe the tree or shrub for a day; if it leans, it may need staking.

Drive the first stake at least 2 feet down into native soil, outside the root ball on the side of the prevailing winds. Set the other stake in on the opposite side. Use broad, smooth strapping material to avoid abrasion, and place the strapping at the highest point on the trunk where the crown stands upright. Place straps using a “figure 8” crossing pattern wrapped around the trunk and securely fastened to the stake. Never use wire, even if it is placed in old garden hose, as this can girdle the plant. Tighten straps so they are firm enough not to contact the stakes but loose enough to allow slight (two to three times the trunk diameter) movement, which increases trunk taper and strength. Check the strapping regularly to ensure it is not causing trunk injury. It may be possible to remove stakes for fall-planted trees by midspring. Remove all staking within one year after planting or growth may be reduced.

Find more best practices at <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/11-woody-ornamentals#best>.

WATER THOROUGHLY according to each plant’s specific needs! We will not be responsible for neglect.

If despite all this care and our advice, your new tree or shrub still dies, just return it with your receipt for a replacement. If the exact plant isn’t available, we will suggest substitutes.