



WE CARE FOR URBAN TREES – A PLANTING GUIDE

Trees reduce energy use, reduce wind and noise, control erosion, clean the air, increase property values and make people feel good. Planting a tree is an investment in time, money, and the future. Here are a few tips to insure that you get a good return on your investment.

- 1. **Selecting quality trees:** choose vigorous, structurally sound trees with straight roots, a thick trunk with taper, and good branch structure. appropriate for the species (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 A quality shade trees grown in the nursery should have a strong central leader even if the leader will be lost at maturity. Temporary branches are important to trunk development because they build a strong trunk and root system.

- 2. **Preparing the site:** Dig a firm, flat-bottomed hole, as deep as the root ball and twice as wide.
- 3. **Installing the tree:** Remove soil and roots from the top of the root ball to expose the root collar; cut away any roots that grow over the collar. Cut any roots that circle or mat along the sides and bottom of the root ball. The root collar should be even with the soil grade after planting (Fig. 2). Backfill with native soil, tamp the ground and water in. Build a berm no more than four inches tall around the root ball helps maintain water at the root ball during as the tree establishes.

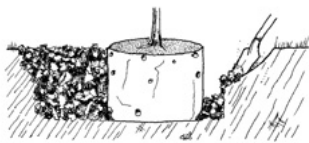


Fig. 2 Prepare a hole as deep and twice as wide as the root ball.

- 4. **Staking:** Staking holds trees erect and allows the root ball to anchor. Secure the tree loosely with flexible, material that won't damage the bark. Remove the stakes within the year after planting.
- 5. **Mulching:** Apply organic mulch to protect tree roots from temperature extremes and conserve soil moisture. Mulch not only prevents competition from grass for water and nutrients but also makes it to operate mowers and weed eaters without hitting the trunk or compacting soil. Apply mulch to a depth of three to four inches, slightly thinner on top of the root ball

- 6. **Irrigating:** Consistent irrigation is critical for establishment.
  - 1. Apply about three gallons irrigation per inch of trunk diameter to the root ball two or three times a week for the first growing season.
  - 2. Increase volume and decrease frequency as the tree becomes established.
  - 3. Weekly irrigation the second year and bimonthly irrigation the third year should be sufficient for establishment.
  - 4. Once established, irrigation requirements depend on species, climate and soil conditions.
  - 5. Irrigation devices should be regularly checked for breaks and leaks.

- 7. **Pruning:** Prune any limbs broken during transplant. Train young trees by pruning out competing leaders, so that there is one dominant trunk for durable tree health. Shorten upright, codominant stems that are more than half the diameter of the central leader. Choose large-diameter branches (dashed line in Fig. 3) and cut back to a smaller lateral branch (solid line in Fig. 3) Thin clusters of branches beginning with branches to open up the tree and create a strong scaffold (Fig. 4). Reducing fast-growing branches and removing branches clustered together forces growth in one dominant trunk.

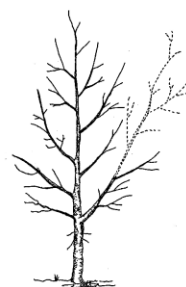


Fig. 3 Reduce the length of vigorous lateral branches.

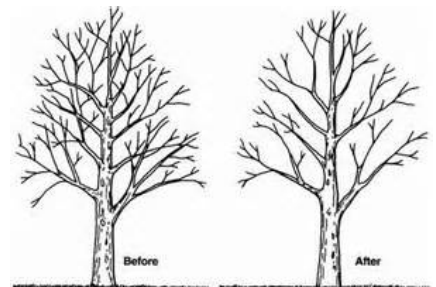


Fig. 4 Remove clusters of limbs (Before) throughout the canopy to create better structure (After).