



Trees are important to our quality of life. They clean and freshen the air by taking in carbon dioxide, storing carbon, giving off oxygen and recycling moisture into the atmosphere. Trees help prevent soil erosion, modify temperatures and light, act as windbreaks, provide food for all and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Trees also increase property values.

Tree planting is a very important activity that, done properly, can benefit the homeowner, as well as the community. Here are a few tips to ensure that the tree you plant gets off to a good start. Trees come in several sizes:

Seedlings: are small, cost less and are easily planted. They come as bareroot or plugs. Their main disadvantage is that they are easily trampled or mown and, in the case of bareroot stock, must be planted soon after they come out of the nursery beds in the spring.

Containers: are larger stock that are a bit more costly, but easily planted. Container stock often survives better than seedling stock. Trees, while in containers, need to be watered regularly.

Balled and Burlapped: are large stock, usually about 2 m in height. They can be heavy and awkward to plant by hand.

Wired Basket: are very large stock with a large root ball. Because of their size, they are best planted by machine.

Select a suitable species and site: Check light, soil and moisture conditions in your yard. Compare these to the requirements of the trees you are considering. Knowing the ultimate size of your tree and ensuring adequate space will be available are critical factors. Remember to stay away from above- and below-ground services by consulting with your utilities (i.e., hydro, gas, cable, and water) before you dig.

Plant trees at least: 5 m from any building; 3 m from hydro lines; 1.5 m from driveways; 1.25 m from old stumps.

Plant shrubs at least: 1 m from any building, patio, paved surface, fence or property line.

A handy reference on selecting a suitable species and site entitled *Choosing the Right Tree: A Landowner's Guide to Putting Down Roots* is available from the Eastern Ontario Model Forest by contacting modelforest@eomf.on.ca.

Prepare the hole: The hole should be twice as wide and the same depth as the root ball or the container. Roughen up the sides and bottom of the hole to allow root penetration into soft soil.

A Guide to PLANTING TREES for Urban Residents



Remove the outer covering:

- In the case of containerized trees, pots eventually decay, but can restrict root growth and should be removed. Gently loosen outer roots to encourage growth.

- Burlap should be cut back a minimum of two-thirds once in the hole, as it will restrict root development.

When planting the tree:

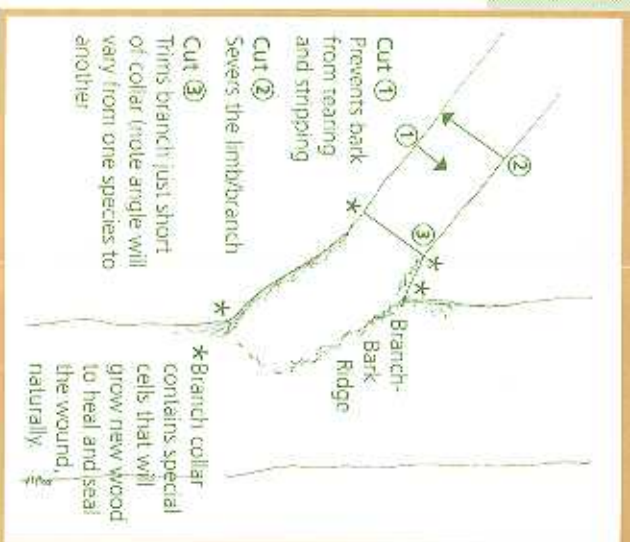
- If bareroot, the root crown is set on a mound of earth in the hole, and the roots spread over it.

- If burlapped or in a container, plant the tree so the root ball is flush with the top of the hole, then fill the hole two-thirds. Tramp down to remove air pockets. Fill the hole with water, and allow it to drain. Finish filling the hole, and make a ridge of soil around the root ball to direct water toward the roots.

Mulch with woodchips or similar organic material approximately 10 cm thick. Leave a 5 cm space around the trunk to prevent trunk rot. Replenish mulch every two years.

Water slowly and deeply after planting. Remove the nozzle from the hose and allow it to trickle for two to three hours once a week if Mother Nature does not provide at least 20 mm of rain. Soils underneath the mulch should feel slightly damp. Check soil moisture frequently for the first two years after planting.

PROPER PRUNING



Stake only when necessary: Only stake trees that are exposed to high winds, or in loose or shallow soil. Remove the stake after one growing season once the roots are established.

Do not: Prune excessively. Prune to a maximum of one-third of the branches by pruning broken low horizontal branches, those that rub on others and those that need to be removed in order to maintain a desirable shape.

Do not: Apply fertilizer the first year except for bone meal or another fertilizer rich in phosphorus (e.g., the middle number in 0-40-0). No trace of bone meal should be left above ground. It attracts animals that may dig up your tree!

Do not: Mow, till, or weed-whack around the base of trees as these activities are highly likely to cause wounds to the bark.

Do not: Compact the soil around the base of the tree.

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