Planting a Bare Root Tree

1. Determine Location
   - 8+ hours of sun
   - Well drained, not in standing water
   - Slopes are better, good air flow
   - Plan on 15’ wide, 15’ tall per tree

2. Soil Test
   - Gather samples 3-6” deep around planting area
   - Send sample to local extension office
   - Results will take a couple of weeks and will tell organic material, pH, potassium, phosphorus, and more
   - See site/soil amendments below for how to amend soil

3. Call 811 Before You Dig
   - Can take up to 5 business days
   - Field locator will flag underground utility lines

4. Gather Tools
   - sod shovel, round point shovel, sharp shooter, rake, spray paint, gloves, wheelbarrow, soaking tub, and burlap

5. Site and Soil Amendments
   - We use no more than one 2 cu ft bag of compost blend per tree (50% Compost & 50% Topsoil)
   - Soil sulfur if pH is above 7 (see qty below)
   - Bone meal if low phosphorus (see qty below)
   - Mycorhizal for root growth, tree acclimation
6. Sod Removal
- Start by marking a 30 inch diameter circle on the ground
- Cut out sod circle and put in a one pile

8. Dig the Hole
- Use sharpshooter and round point shovel
- Start in center of the hole to avoid glassing along the edge of the hole
- Remove soil with round point and make a pile separate from the sod pile
- When starting the edge of the hole, dig perpendicular to the edge to avoid glassing
- Edge of hole should be rough in texture
- Hole should be barrel shaped not V shaped
- Remove “urbanite” and place in separate pile
9. Prepare the Tree and the Hole

- Soak bare root tree for 1 hour before planting
- Add soil amendments by adding soil/compost blend and backfill soil to form a cone at the bottom of the hole
- Add mycorrhizal fungus, sulfur: 1 tsp if pH 7, 2 tsp if pH 7.5, 1 tsp bonemeal if low phosphorus
- Pull tree out of soaking bucket
- Tree is really 2 trees: scion (variety) and rootstock, the graft is where they are joined

- Place tree in the hole making sure roots are level or slightly above ground level (since it will settle)
- Hold tree upright in hole and backfill with soil/compost blend and original soil, making sure soil clods are broken up

- Place soil around roots making sure to space roots out evenly
- Be careful not to damage trunk with tools
- As soil is filled in, massage soil around roots, this removes air pockets and helps the tree settle
- Continue this action until the hole is filled and all backfill is used
- Do not compact soil with feet
10. Leftover Sod
- All sod removed earlier can now be cut and placed green side down around outer edge of the hole
- Do not reuse Bermuda grass sod, THROW IT AWAY!

11. Mulch
- Mulch protects trees from mechanical mower damage, it helps keep weeds away from the tree, and it breaks down (adding carbon to the soil)
- Mulch with hardwood, not coniferous, wood chips
- Hardwood chips benefit soil health and evergreen (coniferous) chips do not
- Mulch should be 4” thick around the edges and less than 1” around the trunk
- Mulch should extend beyond the sod ring

12. Water
- A newly planted tree will require 5-10 gal of water
- Water should be split into 2 applications in order to allow all the water to soak in slowly
- Fill a 5 gallon bucket with a gentle shower spray, counting the time it takes to fill the bucket, this is how long it will take to water 5 gallons or the gallons/minute

13. Tree Support
Bamboo and Tie Tape:
- Place bamboo firmly in soil next to tree
- Tie in 2 or 3 locations on the tree, one on the rootstock
- Check every 6 months and remove or adjust if too tight

Deciduous hardwood mulch
5-10 gallons per tree
Bamboo
Tie Tape
T-Posts and Wire:

- Use in high wind, high use areas
- Drive posts on east and west sides of tree on outside edge of mulch ring
- Cut 2 pieces of wire twice the length of the distance from the stake to the tree
- Run wire through old hose piece
- Place wire and hose around trunk
- With a helper on the other side, loosely tighten the wire making certain the tree is straight and plumb
- Do not over tighten the wires
- Check wires and remove after one or two years

Questions - Please contact us

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