

Selecting Your Tree

Things to consider before planting a tree.



Where to Plant

Where you plant a tree is very important. The first step is to look up. If there are overhead utilities plant a low growing tree or select a different planting site. Planting a tall growing tree where it doesn't have room to grow can lead to the unsightly and unhealthy practice of topping as shown above.



Right tree right place

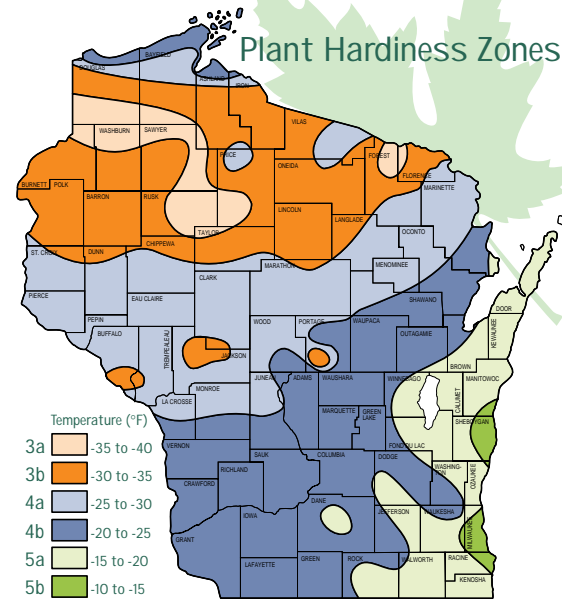
The second step is to look down. Are there underground utilities, waterlines, or septic systems in the area? If so, select a different planting site.



The last step is to look around. Make sure you leave plenty of room for your tree to grow. That perfect spot right next to the house may not be so perfect when the tree reaches its mature size.

The Hardiness Zone

Trees are classified by *hardiness zone*. The hardiness zone is based on the lowest average winter temperature that a tree can tolerate. Wisconsin has six different zones ranging from 3a (coldest) to 5b (warmest). Know your hardiness zone and choose trees adapted to that zone.



Types of Nursery Stock



Bare Root – Just as the name implies, these trees do not have soil around the roots. Advantages: less expensive, lightweight, condition of the root system is

easily seen and stock recovers quickly after planting. Disadvantages: limited availability, roots must be kept moist and stock must be planted while dormant.

Containerized – There are two types of containerized trees: 1) *potted*, a bare root tree placed in a pot with soil and 2) *container grown*, a tree that has grown in a pot for at least a year. Advantages: easy to handle and plant, and stock can be planted anytime during the growing season. Disadvantages: circling roots (if stock left in container too long) and condition of the root system is not readily visible.



Balled and Burlapped (B & B) – These trees are dug with a ball of soil around the roots. The ball is wrapped in burlap and tied with twine. The root ball may be within a wire basket. Advantages: stock is available throughout the growing season, is often larger and provides greater visual impact.



Disadvantages: expensive, heavy, difficult to move and plant and often difficult to locate the root collar (see photo at right) and plant the tree at the proper depth.

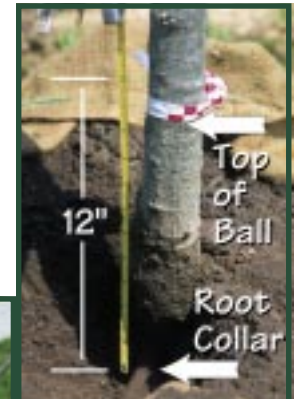
The root collar is the place where the trunk tissue meets the root tissue.



7 Steps in Planting Your Tree

IMPORTANT – Call Before You Dig!
Contact Diggers Hotline at
1-800-242-8511

Step 1 – Determine where the root collar is located within the root ball.



Step 2 – Dig a planting space two to three times wider than the root ball, but no deeper.



To determine proper planting depth, measure the distance from the bottom of the root ball to the root collar. To help the roots grow, widen the planting site by tilling or spading around the excavated area.



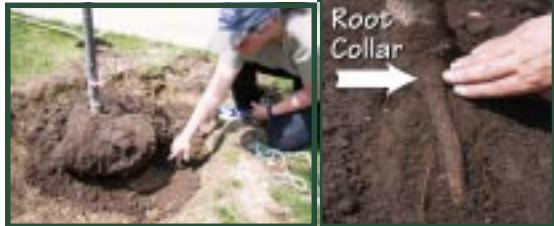
Step 3 – Before placing a tree in its planting space, remove all tags, ribbons, and trunk guard. Carefully roll the tree into its planting space. To avoid root damage, don't drag or lift the tree by the trunk. Gently guide the tree into the planting hole.

Step 4 – Remove twine, clip and fold back wire basket and trim burlap. If left on, this material can girdle the tree.



Note: If planting a containerized tree remove the entire pot.

Step 5 – Carefully remove soil from the top of the root ball to expose the root collar.



Check to see that the root collar is either level with or 1” to 2” above finished grade. Planting a tree too deep can kill it!



Step 6 – Back fill planting space with excavated soil. Water thoroughly to eliminate air pockets. Do not tamp!



Step 7 – Celebrate a job well done ... a properly planted tree!

For more information, contact the WDNR Forestry Program at 608/267-7494 or your local county UW- Extension office.

Step 1-7 photos taken by Bob Queen.

Caring For Your Tree

Watering - Water as needed throughout the season, about 1" per week. To avoid over-watering, remember to check the wetness of the soil under the mulch and adapt your watering to rainfall and soil conditions.



Mulching - Mulch improves soil structure and aeration, keeps roots cool and moist, controls weeds, and keeps lawnmowers and weed whips away from the trunk. To properly mulch, apply 2" to 4" of woody mulch (aged wood chips, shredded bark or something similar) over the root zone. Make sure to pull the mulch 3" to 6" away from the trunk to prevent bark rot and limit rodent feeding.

Staking – Most newly planted trees do not need to be staked. If staking is necessary, use wide webbing straps. Secure webbing to stakes with heavy gauge wire. Attach materials so that the tree is allowed to move in the wind.



Do not encircle the tree with wire threaded through a garden hose – this can girdle the tree. Remove stakes and ties within one year. The use of trunk wrap is not recommended.



Proper Pruning – Less is better, newly planted trees need all the leaves they can get. Remove only dead, broken, diseased or rubbing branches.

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New Tree Planting



"One who plants a tree, plants hope."

L.P.M.G.