

Tree Sapling Planting Instructions

1. Where to plant

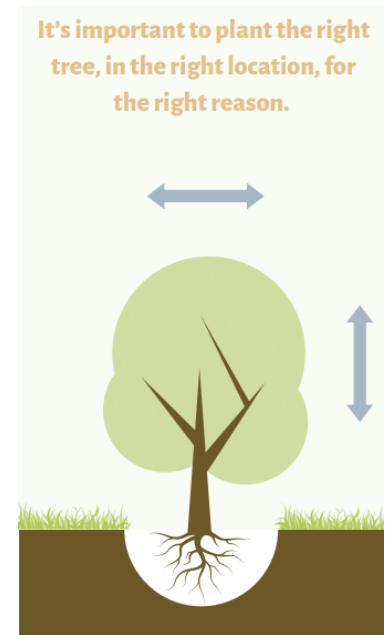
Spacing: You'll want to choose a location with as much space as possible, remember these are canopy trees so they will be much larger and wider than they are now.

Obstructions: Remember to look up! Do not plant a canopy tree underneath hydro wires unless it's a species that stays 6 metres or shorter. If you have not done so before, you should know where any underground utilities run on your property. Contact Ontario One Call before you dig (<https://www.ontarioonecall.ca/>) and allow 1.5m distance from any underground services. It is also a good idea to keep 3-4 metres distant from things like hydro transformers, water hydrants, light poles, septic tanks and foundations.

Soil: You'll want to avoid dense hard-packed soil - the roots need to be able to grow downward and laterally. Silt and clay soils are more porous and will have higher water retention capacity. If you are planting in front and side yards, check that your tree has some salt tolerance.

Sunlight: You'll need a space with at least partial sunlight - some species prefer full sun (6hrs+).

Benefits: Consider where you want shade or windbreak. Native species have higher ecological benefits.



2. How to Plant

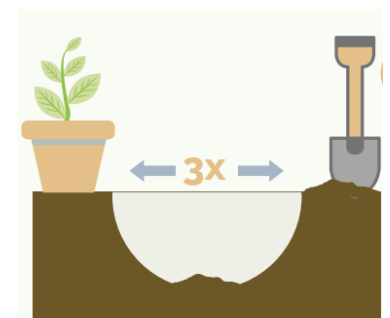
Acclimating your tree to its new home is imperative to the longevity of its life. The best time to plant new trees is during the fall or early spring where trees experience the least amount of environmental stress.

The hole you dig: Aim to dig a hole three times as large as the size of the diameter of the root ball. This ensures there is loose ground soil to allow the roots to grow and establish themselves. The depth of the hole should be a little deeper (e.g. at least 5 cm) than the pot that contains the sapling. Loosen or "rough up" the soil on the sides and bottom of the planting hole so they are not smooth. This helps move excess moisture into the ground beyond the planting hole.

Start by removing your tree from its pot. Lay your tree on its side and gently roll the container to loosen the soil, or place the bottom of the pot on your knee and gently push the soil ball upward. Don't pull the tree out of the pot by tugging on the trunk.

Wash the roots: Grab a large pail or wheelbarrow, something large enough to hold water to soak your tree's root ball in. You'll want to soak the root ball to help loosen tightly bound soil as possible (there's great nutrients in that soil water - pour it into the hole you'll be planting your tree in).

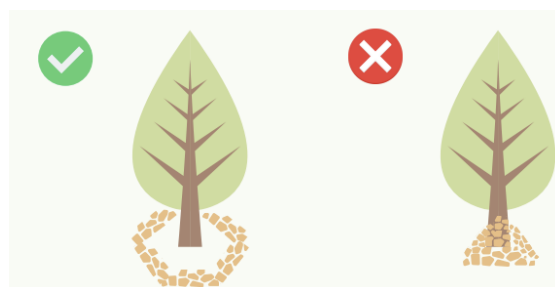
Comb the roots: You'll need to loosen and comb out the tree's roots so that they will expand outward rather than continuing to grow within the small amount of space it has been used to. Using a sharp knife or pruning saw make at least four vertical cuts down the walls of the root ball spaced around the circumference of the root ball. Any roots that appear to be encircling the ball must be severed (this is called girdling, comes from roots being rootbound in the pot, and can kill trees several years after being planted).



Place your tree upright in the middle of the hole: The root collar (where the trunk starts to flare out and meet the roots) should be level with the surrounding ground. Remove or add more soil in the bottom of the hole to ensure the proper finished planting height. Fill in the hole with the soil you dug out of the hole. Replace the soil with your hands until the roots are covered and gently pat down. Do not pack down the soil around your tree! It is better to let gravity & time do that job for you once your tree has grown out its root system.

Water your tree after planting: No need to add fertiliser. The tree soil should be moist but not over-watered. Slow watering is best. Using a hose set to a trickle, or a bucket with holes at the base, are great tools to ensure deep watering.

Mulching: Mulch is a layer of material (e.g. shredded bark/bark chips/partially decomposed wood chips) added to the surface of the soil and is beneficial for newly planted trees. It keeps the soil underneath moist, helps to protect the plant from mower and trimmer damage, reduces competition by weeds and grass, feeds the soil, and regulates temperatures. The best way to distribute mulch at the base of a tree is in a donut-like fashion approximately a hand's width away from the trunk. Piling mulch in a "volcano" against the trunk can lead to rot and decay at the base of the tree. Mulch donuts can be 5-10 cm thick.



Support and Protection: You do not need to prop up your tree. Do not prune your tree at this time, except to remove dead, injured, or diseased branches. If your tree is in a high traffic area and you want to protect it (including from dogs) - consider installing posts/flags around your tree.

3. Post-Planting Care

Congratulations! You've planted a tree! What now? You will need to keep an eye on your tree for the first couple of years while it is still a sapling.

- For the first 1-2 Weeks: *Water Daily* (keep moist, but not saturated)
- Water twice a week for the remaining growing months (until the fall)
- Next growing season (Spring/Summer 2024): *Water weekly*.

Here are some resources to support you and your new tree:

- <https://canopy.org/tree-info/caring-for-trees/young-trees/>
- <https://ottawa.ca/en/living-ottawa/environment-conservation-and-climate/trees-and-urban-forests>
- <https://www.greenthumb-ottawa.com/the-most-common-problems-trees-in-ontario-face/>
- <https://forestsontario.ca/en/resources>