



Tree Planting

Trees are one of the most important components of our environment. They improve air quality, provide food and shelter for humans and wildlife, and also influence climate change. Tree planting is a way to re-establish forest areas that have been lost in the past. But tree planting is not as simple as putting any tree in the ground anywhere. There are many steps to be followed in order to ensure successful tree planting and forest re-establishment.

1. Choice of Location

The location of where a tree will be planted is one of the most important steps. This is especially important in urban areas where concrete and asphalt are the major ground cover types. When selecting a location for planting, you must determine: if there is enough root and canopy space for a mature tree, if there are any obstructions (ex. overhead wires, other trees, underground utilities), if the tree will provide any benefits (ex. shade, aesthetics).



2. Choice of Tree Species

After choosing an appropriate location for planting, one must determine what tree is suitable for that location. It is most important to be familiar with what native tree species grow in your area (contact your municipality to get a list) and to promote those species. Make sure your species selection is appropriate for your location (take into account things like average mature tree size and height, pollution tolerance, etc.)

3. Digging

Trees planted on private property are the property-owners responsibility. Property-owners are responsible for any damages done to utilities on their property. Make sure to contact your municipality before you dig. It is also important to consider the space taken up by already established trees. Avoid damaging any roots of already established trees when digging. Make sure to dig a deep and wide enough hole to cover all the roots.

4. Proper Planting

Before planting a tree, you must make sure that the weather is suitable in order to ensure successful tree growth. Weather plays a fundamental role for newly planted trees. The best time to plant new trees is during the fall or early spring because that is when the tree experiences the least amount of environmental stress (at these times, the tree is not performing photosynthesis, and is either going into dormancy for the winter, or coming out of it). Ideal weather conditions include: cool temperatures, cloudy and humid, and not windy.

Planting Steps:

- o Remove any containers from the roots
- o Place the tree upright and in the middle of the hole
- o Backfill the hole until the roots are covered; DO NOT tamp the soil with your feet!
- o If these conditions are not present, you must keep your tree in a cool shady area, and make sure to keep roots moist until a suitable planting day presents itself.

5. Apply Fertilizer

Trees require a balance of nutrients in their system to grow healthy. Fertilizers not only provide nutrients for growth, but they also help newly planted trees build resistance to insects and diseases. A common mistake by new tree planters is applying fertilizers directly to the tree. One should not place fertilizer into the planting hole at all, and only apply fertilizer lightly in the following spring.

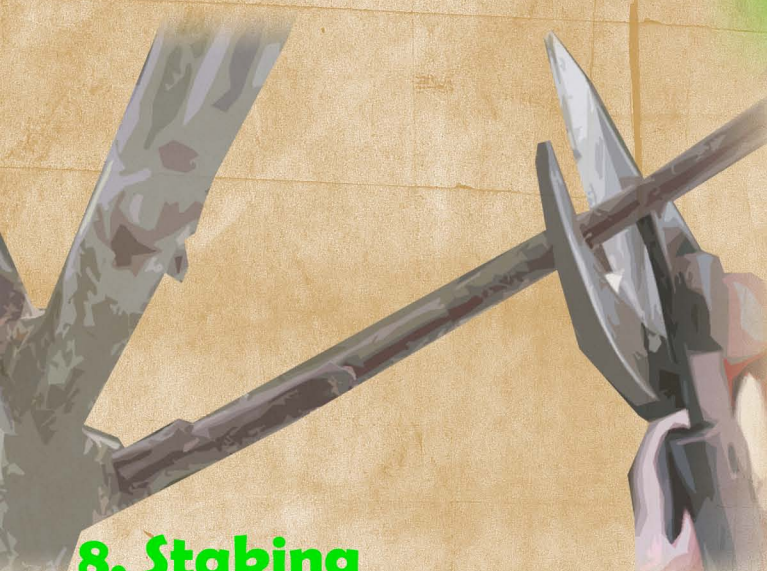
6. Watering

Watering your tree once it has been planted is a necessity. NEVER pack the soil around the tree with your feet (this will cause soil compaction and may reduce water absorption). Instead, use water to settle the soil, and if necessary, apply more soil where necessary. It is very important to make sure that the tree soil is always moist, and to not over-water. Make sure to thoroughly water the tree in the fall so that it has enough water for the winter.



7. Pruning

Pruning should only take place if necessary. Situations in which to prune a tree include the removal of dead, injured, or diseased branches. It is also important to prune away any branches that stray away from giving the tree a uniform look.



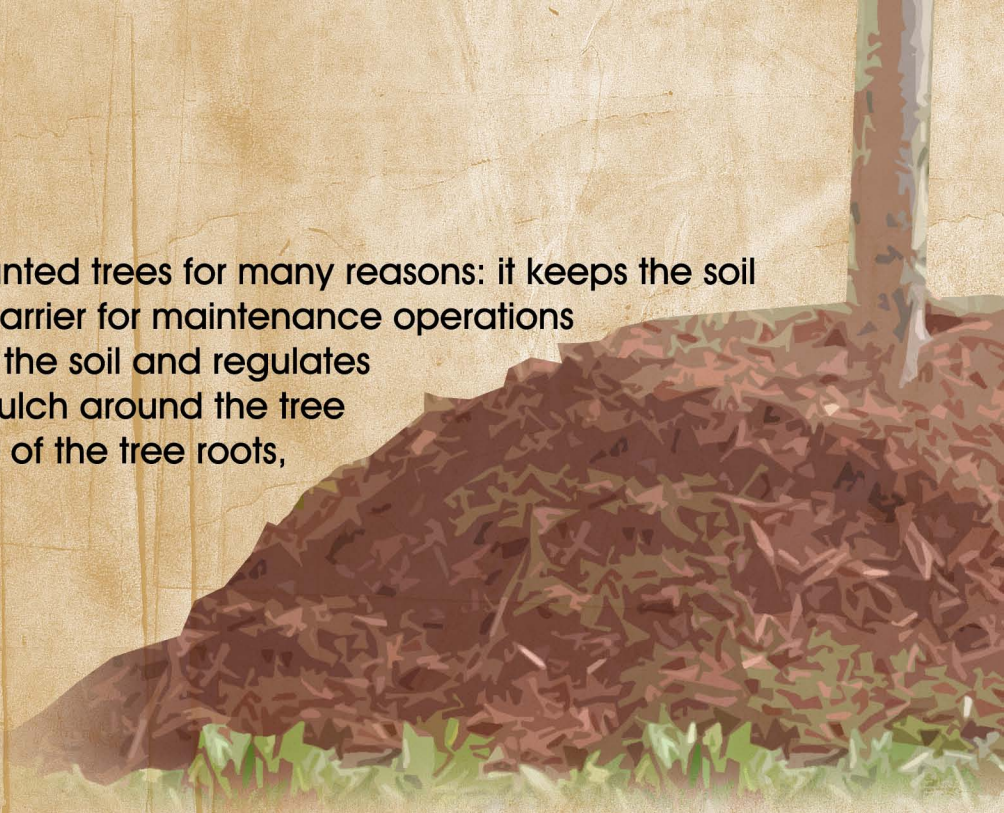
8. Staking

The misconception by new tree planters is the need to stake every new tree. Trees that are small or in wind-free locations do not need to be staked at all. Also, staking trees using metal wire and a garden hose is unsuitable. An appropriate way to stake trees is by using staking straps and carpentering. Staking should only last a year, once the tree has established its roots in the soil. If kept too long, staking causes physical constraints and damage to the tree (ex. girdling: when a tree begins to grow over an obstacle that is in its way).



9. Mulching

Mulch is important for newly planted trees for many reasons: it keeps the soil underneath moist, it acts as a barrier for maintenance operations (ex. lawn mowing), and it feeds the soil and regulates temperatures. The amount of mulch around the tree should be equivalent to the size of the tree roots, and about 3-4 inches in height.



10. Winter Wrapping

Tree wrapping is not a necessity, however, it does help protect young deciduous trees, increasing their survival rate. Deciduous trees should be wrapped with crepe paper or another type of tree wrap in the late fall, and wraps should be removed in early spring. This should be repeated for the first 2-3 seasons. It is important to remove any trunk wraps (usually plastic) from a purchased tree immediately because they may harbor disease or insects during the summer.