

# Planting Guide



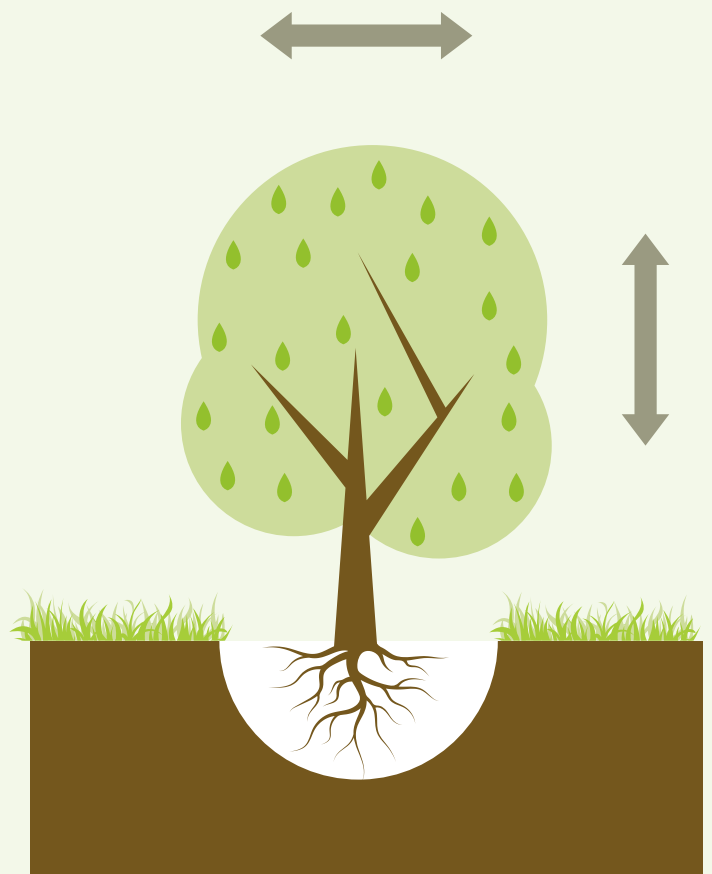
Trees are integral to our natural environment. They improve air quality, provide food and shelter, and help fight climate change. Tree planting is a way to re-establish forested areas, although it isn't as simple as putting a tree in the ground anywhere.

**It's important to plant the right tree in the right location for the right reason.**

## Location

The planting location is very important, particularly in urban areas where concrete and asphalt are the major ground cover types. Root and canopy space, environmental obstructions (i.e. overhead wires, septic tank, foundation, underground utilities), and potential benefits (i.e. shade, windbreak) should be considered before the location is selected.

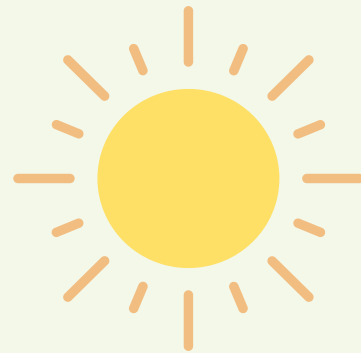
Always confirm whether you have underground utilities – please contact Ontario One Call to find out more. Contacting One Call is the law before digging and helps to keep you safe and prevent damages. It also helps you determine which locations to avoid when planting your new tree.



## Selecting the Right Tree

### Plant for the future!

The tree species needs to be suitable for the location selected. Opting for native species grown in your area, as well as considering factors such as mature tree size, canopy width, moisture, and sunlight, can help ensure the success of the tree. Use the [Take Root Quiz](#) and review the [Take Root Tree Information Cards](#) to explore what tree is best for you.

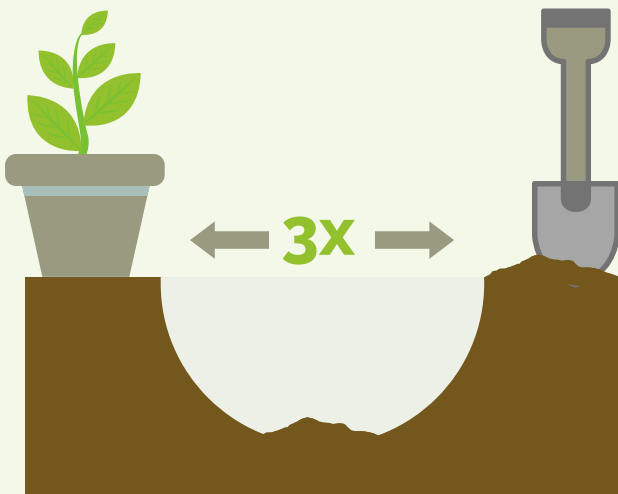


## Planting

Weather plays a fundamental role for newly planted trees. The best time to plant new trees is during the fall or early spring, where trees experience the least amount of environmental stress.

1

The diameter of the hole should be three (3) times the diameter of the potted tree. This ensures there is plenty of loose ground soil to allow the roots to grow and establish themselves.



2

The depth of the hole should be a little deeper (e.g. at least 5 cm) than the pot that contains the sapling.

3

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.

## Planting

4

To remove the tree from the 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. **Do not pull the tree out of the pot by tugging on the trunk.**



5

Place the 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.

6

Replace the soil with your hands until the roots are covered and gently pat down.

7

If you are planting into a lawn area, the sod removed for the tree planting hole can be composted for your garden or broken into pieces and placed root side up around the perimeter of the mulch ring / “donut” (see mulching on the next page) to help hold the mulch in place.



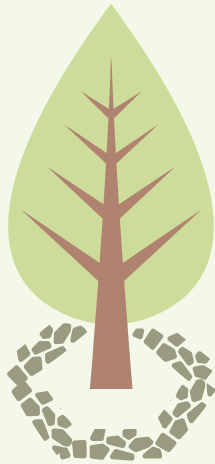
## Watering

Watering the new tree is key to its success. It's essential that the tree soil is 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. After the initial watering at planting time, check your tree regularly and water as needed to ensure it doesn't dry out, especially during the summer heat (e.g. check weekly during the first couple seasons).

## 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 50-100mm (2-4 inches) thick.



## Pruning

Do not prune your tree, except to remove dead, injured, or diseased branches.

**For additional information, check with your municipality on tree planting recommendations, guidelines, and by-laws**

