Fall is a great time to plant trees and shrubs. Roots will become established for superior spring growth. Follow the instructions below for best success.

1. Loosen soil 3 to 5 times the width of the tree root ball.

2. Dig a hole only as wide and deep as the root ball.

3. Remove the tree from the pot.

4. Cut or score roots ½ to 1 inch with a knife to stimulate root growth and mitigate any potential circling roots.

5. Place the tree in the hole on solid ground, slightly above ground level.

6. Fill the hole with the same soil that was removed. No amendments, root stimulator, or fertilizers! When the hole is half filled with soil, water to remove air pockets.
7 Finish filling the hole leaving a slightly depressed basin above the root ball.

8 Water to settle all the soil around the root ball.

9 If drip irrigation is used place tubing around the root ball.

10 Always water out to the tree drip-edge (tips of the branches). Gradually reduce watering over several weeks.

11 Spread mulch around the entire loosened soil area to conserve moisture, reduce weeds and cool the soil. Pull mulch away from the trunk.

12 Mulch should be 3 to 4 inches deep. Use a soda, fruit or vegetable can to determine the proper depth.

13 Prune off any broken, damaged or dead branches. Leave lower branches on the trunk (“trashy trunk”). Remove 1/3 of trunk branches each year after 3 years, to encourage trunk and root growth. Only use tree stakes if needed.

14 Sit down, relax and enjoy your new properly planted tree!


Photos by Lori Kovash

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