

You have chosen to plant a tree that in the not too distant future will begin to provide some much needed shade from our hot Texas summers, perhaps some beautiful spring blossoms or maybe some pecans to be shared with you and your squirrels. No matter what the original intent, a tree is a wonderful gift to our children and warrants your doing your very best in helping it get established so that it will be healthy and long lived. Here are some important tips to follow in planting and taking care of your tree. This same technique can be used if you are planting a single shrub.



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1. Remove excess soil from the top of the root ball so that the root flare is exposed. Now dig the hole only deep enough to allow the top of the root flare to be slightly above grade when placing the tree in the hole. The width of the hole (especially at the surface of the ground) should be two to three times as wide as the ball. Make the sides of the hole rough (not smooth and slick).

2. Check for proper drainage: Fill the hole with water and wait until at least three-fourths of the water is gone before planting. If the hole is still half full of water after two hours, you probably have a drainage problem and should move the plant to a different place or see us about how to improve the drainage at that site or for a recommendation on a plant that will thrive in wet areas.

3. Remove the plant from the container. Loosen the roots (if the plant was pot-bound) by roughing up (tearing) the roots with your hands or with a knife.

4. Always plant "wet-to-wet". Mix a solution of two tablespoons of liquid seaweed in a gallon of water. Moisten the hole and saturate the exposed roots of the plant with this solution (promotes root growth by providing trace elements and hormones). Place the plant in the hole. The top of the plant ball should be even with or slightly higher (1") than the ground.

5. Backfill the planting hole halfway with only the same soil that came from the hole. Do not bring in "good" soil--this will cause more harm than good. Sprinkle in the recommended amount of mycorrhizal fungi (beneficial bacteria that help make

essential soil nutrients available to the plant faster and improve plant resistance to many root diseases). Fill the hole with water to settle the soil and assure that there will be no air pockets. Backfill the rest of the hole with the remaining soil and water again until the soil is settled at the surface level.

6. Cover the entire surface of the hole with a generous layer of lava sand and one inch of compost. Cover the compost with 3 to 4 inches of finely shredded hardwood bark or native cedar mulch. Do not let grass grow over the newly planted area for at least the first year. Be careful not to pile the mulch right up against the trunk of the tree.

7. Different soils require different watering techniques. Sandy soils drain quickly and may require more water. Clay soils may drain slowly and hence

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require less water. Water so that the soil is evenly moist at least 3 to 4 inches down. Water slowly and deeply (a slow trickle for several hours). Do not over water – this will drown the tree's roots. If there is standing water 2 to 3 hours after a watering cycle, you have watered too much. In the heat of the summer you may have to do this type of supplemental watering for newly planted trees once or even twice a week. In the cooler seasons, once every week or even once every other week may be enough. Once the tree is established (usually after the second year), supplemental watering may have to be applied during periods of extreme drought. Natural rainfall, high drying winds or low humidity also affect your watering program.

8. Include the tree/shrub planting area in your regular fertilization program. Apply a granular fertilizer such as *Redenta's Organic Fertilizer* at 20

pounds/1000 square feet in early spring, mid summer and again in late fall. Foliar spray the trunk of the tree, as much of the canopy of the tree as you can and the ground under the tree (with *Garret Juice* or *Bioform*) at least five times during the growing season.

9. If you do have clay or tightly compacted soil, spray the root zone with *Bio-Inoculant*. *Bio-Inoculant* contains beneficial microbes that will mellow and aerate the soil naturally. Topdress with 1 inch of compost and lava sand at 4 pounds/100 square feet.

10. If your tree is struggling with an insect infestation, there are some easy remedies. Releases of beneficial insects most often will control infestations. Be patient. Only if you are having no success with the beneficial insects should you resort to the other sprays – do remember that even citrus oil will

harm the beneficial insects that are present.

**Aphids:** Strong blasts of water followed by a release of ladybugs and/or green lacewings. Sprays of garlic pepper tea and citrus oil also can control infestations.

**Borers:** Squirt beneficial nematodes into the holes and apply to the soil area around the tree. Apply *Tree Trunk Goop* to the trunk of the tree where the borers are evident. The *Goop* may need to be reapplied if washed off by rain or by the sprinkler system.

**Caterpillars and other worms:** Release trichogramma wasps. Spray with Bt (*bacillus thuringiensis*) products.

**Spider Mites:** Release ladybugs and green lacewings. Spray with liquid seaweed and citrus oil every three days for nine days.

## TREATMENT FOR TREES IN STRESS

1. Make sure the root flare is exposed. If it is not, remove the excess soil.
2. Aerate the root zone deeply. Start about half way between the trunk and drip line and then continue well beyond the drip line. An easier alternative is to spray the root zone with *Bio-Inoculant*-beneficial microbes that will mellow and aerate the soil naturally.
3. Apply one inch of compost as well as lava sand and Texas greensand at 40 pounds /1000 square feet, dry molasses at 5 pounds/1000 square feet, corn meal at 10 pounds/1000 square feet, earthworm castings at 20 pounds/1000 square feet and alfalfa meal at 20 pounds/1000 square feet. This mixture (except for the compost) is available pre-mixed as *Tree Treatment*.
4. Top the area with at least three inches of shredded hardwood or native cedar mulch.
5. Spray the tree and the ground with *Garrett Juice* or *Bioform* and *Agrispon* at least once a month while the tree is in stress.
6. If there is any physical damage to the tree, spray the wounds with hydrogen peroxide (full strength, straight out of the bottle) and then apply *Tree Trunk Goop* to the area. The *Goop* may need to be reapplied after a rain.