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Tree Planting Instructions

The majority of the trees that are shipped from the nursery have their root system wrapped with burlap and protected by a wire cage (wire basket) to aid in the transportation and planting of the tree. The burlap keeps the soil in place around the delicate root hairs and keeps the root structure moist.

NOTE: We recommend that the majority of the wire and burlap stay on the tree! The wire won't harm the tree and the burlap will rot quickly and won't restrict root growth.

The following steps should be taken to properly plant a wire basket tree:

- Dig the hole the same depth as the root ball – NEVER deeper. For example, if the distance from the top to the bottom of the basket is 17", then the hole should be that deep. The top of the root ball should be level or slightly above the surrounding grade, this helps to prevent establishment issues and future growth problems.
- The width of the hole should be wider than the width of the wire basket. Aim for twice the diameter if possible. The wider you can provide the better. It should have sloping sides and a firm base (think saucer shape).
- Place the tree in the hole by gently tipping the tree and root ball and sliding the root ball down the sloping edge of your planting hole. Level and straighten the tree, use a shovel or bar to lift from the base. Support but do not excessively pull on the stem.
- Backfill with soil 1/3. Firmly tamp down around the base and stabilize the soil then water thoroughly. This will eliminate any air pockets (especially on clay soil).
- Once stabilized you can remove the twine and bend or remove the top loops of the wire basket (or top 3rd of the basket only) so it doesn't protrude above the soil line. Cut away any excess burlap by running a sharp knife around the top edge of the root ball.
- Continue backfilling the rest of the planting hole this time only gently tamping the soil so not to compact.
- In windy areas trees should be staked to offer support while the new roots are growing. We like using 6' T-Rail steel stakes. These should be pounded on the outside of the root ball area. You could also use 2" x 2" wooden stakes, however check regularly for breakages.
- Traditional material for guying trees is wire slipped through garden hose however any nonabrasive, smooth, flat webbing can be used as long as it is flexible. Check regularly to make sure no damage to the trunk is occurring.
- Create a slight ridge around the outer edge of the root ball using topsoil. This will help direct and retain water into the root ball and reduce runoff.
- Once fully planted water again.
- Mulch may be added to the planting area 2-3" deep to aid moisture retention, deter weed growth and improve appearance. Keep two-finger width mulch free area around the stem to discourage surface rooting and stem issues.

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A few things to remember:

HANDLING - When moving the tree with a machine or cart, make extra care to be gentle with the tree. For example, don't drop the tree off of the truck or roll it into place! Also make sure the trunk does not get scraped with a chain or loader. Hook on to the basket and not the trunk.

USING A MACHINE - If the tree is hoisted with a tractor or machine, make sure there is no one underneath the tree. If the wire breaks and the tree falls it could easily hurt or kill someone!

HIGH-WATER TABLE - The tree should not be planted in a consistently wet area or where the root ball will be partially submerged. The roots need oxygen to function. You need to determine the level of the water table and plant above this. Building up the planting area around the protruding root ball and staking the tree will be necessary.

WATERING - It is critical to water the new tree regularly for the first two growing seasons. Aim to water every 3 days and during periods of drought thereafter.

- ❖ For a 32" root ball, 20L each watering should be sufficient but soil type will be a factor to consider. At the same time it's important to not over water~ e.g. watering every day all day.
- ❖ To achieve a deep thorough watering you could place a slow-trickle hose on the root ball. To calibrate how long it takes to deliver sufficient water, measure the time it takes to fill 1L container then multiply by 20.
- ❖ Once you know, make it easy - you could set up your irrigation system on a timer.
- ❖ Check the soil after watering the first few times to ensure the soil is adequately wet around the whole root ball. This is especially important if using an overhead sprinkler system as areas can get missed. Adjust your watering depending on your findings.
- ❖ Do not irrigate if the soil is already saturated.

REDUCING WIND BURN ON EVERGREENS – Making sure your evergreen trees are well hydrated as winter approaches will help to reduce the possibility of windburn. In high wind locations consider wrapping.

STAKES - The stakes and guying should be removed after the first year or checked and adjusted if left longer.

FERTILIZING - After year one fertilize annually with a general-purpose granular fertilizer (not lawn fertilizer). Application rates and frequency will depend on the product you are using. We usually fertilize once a year in spring using our specially formulated controlled-release granular 16-6-12 fertilizer (*which is available to purchase*). Amounts depend on tree size but at least a couple of handfuls per tree evenly cast on the soil around the root area is usually sufficient.

If fertilizing with animal manure, make sure it is well rotted. If it is fresh, the nitrogen will burn the roots.

MAINTENANCE - Keep weed whackers, trimmers and mowers away from the trunk of the trees! If grass is kept right up to the trunk you can use a guard. However, it is advisable and better for the tree if a mulch ring is created.

Remember that once the tree is initially dug at the nursery and placed in the wire basket, that tree can be planted at any time throughout the year. Trees are not restricted to spring or fall only plantings.