

Selecting a Location:

Ideally, every tree should be planted in accord with some overall landscape plan. You should take into consideration the effect you wish to achieve, the size of the tree and the plants around it, and the way trees are to be pruned and maintained. As a general rule, trees should be placed so that they may develop freely without crowding each other, the house, utility lines or other structures. Before selecting an exact spot for a tree, determine its mature size by consulting the list attached to this handout. Most trees grow as wide as they grow tall, so estimate width from the ultimate height. Due to their size, shade trees should be placed well away from the house or other buildings. Keep in mind that in years to come, the tree might lose branches in storms. For this reason, oaks and other strong, large shade trees should be placed at least 20 feet away from buildings and utility lines.

Planting:

- The planting hole should be the same depth as the root ball of the tree, but 50 to 100% wider.
- Examine the tree roots closely for injury. If any of the roots are crushed or broken, cut them at a point just inside of the injury. If there are roots encircling more than 1/3 of the root ball, cut these by making 3 vertical cuts spaced equally around the rootball. This will not harm the tree if it is properly watered. Prune any broken branches just beyond the collar.
- Prepare the soil taken from the hole with Planting Starter Mix. Also add organic matter such as **CoirBrick Coconut Fiber Peat** at a rate of 1/3 part to 2/3 existing soil.
- Put some of the prepared mixture back into the bottom of the hole, making sure that the depth of the hole is equal to that of the root ball. Wet the soil in the bottom of the hole so that it settles.
- Gently place the tree into the hole, again checking that the soil at the top of the root ball is level with the soil in your yard. Fill the sides of the hole around the root ball with the remaining mixture. Gently firm the soil mixture around the base of the tree.
- Eliminate air pockets by using a gentle stream of water from a hose. Form a ridge of soil 2 to 4 inches high around the margin of the hole to serve as a reservoir when watering.



Planting in low areas:

If you know that your soil stays wet for days during the rainy season, you will need to berm the planting area first. This means the actual planting height of the tree will be higher than the existing ground.. Use soil to build a mound, again, keeping the top of the root ball even with the new ground level. You may still make a reservoir to help in watering.

Watering:

For the first two to three weeks, it is very important that new trees be watered thoroughly every day during hot weather, every other day in cooler weather. Watering should be done by hand with a hose to completely soak the soil in the root zone. Even if you have an automatic sprinkler system, water should be applied with a hose to ensure that it is absorbed deeply into the soil. Do not make frequent, light waterings; it is more important to water trees very thoroughly each time you water. Turn the hose pressure down and apply water slowly so that it does not strike the soil surface too hard and then run off.

For the next 3 to 4 weeks, water thoroughly by hose two to three times per week. Keep in mind that you must be flexible with this schedule. If it rains, water should be cut back a corresponding amount. Some areas of Brevard County tend to stay quite moist during the rainy season—special precautions must be taken in these areas.

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Fertilizing:

Your tree will thrive if fertilized properly. You have two fertilizing options, traditional or organic. If you opt for **traditional fertilizing**, apply Sunniland's 6-6-6 one month after planting. If you do not use Sunniland products, make sure that the 6-6-6 you choose contains minor nutrients. Normally, established trees are fertilized three times per year (March, June & September). To give them a better start, young and newly-planted trees should be fertilized six times at half the recommended amount on the bag during the growing season (mid-February to October 1). **Never fertilize after the first of October!** Spread the fertilizer on the surface up to the dripline of the tree, but do not allow fertilizer to come in contact with the tree trunk. Our porous soils leach nutrients quickly, so it is not necessary to dig the fertilizer in. We do not recommend fertilizer spikes.

Since **organic fertilizers** contain only natural products, they will not burn the tree roots. **Espoma Tree-Tone** should be applied immediately after planting and every two months thereafter during the growing season. Apply 4 cups each time for large established trees and proportionately smaller amounts for younger trees.

Traditional and organic fertilization both have their advantages and disadvantages. Traditional fertilizer is used less often and contains minor nutrients. However, you must take care to use the exact recommended amount to prevent fertilizer burn. Two advantages that organic fertilizer has over traditional fertilizer are that organics will not burn roots or leaves and they are also safer for the environment. If signs of minor element deficiencies occur, minor nutritional spray should be applied.

Finally, avoid using "weed and feed" fertilizers around your trees since they may cause longterm harm.

Pruning:

The main goal of pruning a young tree is to maintain one dominant central trunk; avoid co-dominant stems. This is done by heading back vigorous shoots that tend to compete with the leader. Lower branches can be removed—a few at a time—over a period of several years in order to achieve the desired ground clearance. Any tree pruning that requires the use of a ladder should be done by a certified ISA arborist.

Staking:

Stake your tree if necessary. If a tree is too tall to stand alone, it should be staked to avoid shifting in high winds.

There are two general ways to stake a tree. The first is using poles driven into the ground. The stakes should be strong enough to support the tree. If the tree is leaning, pull it to the stake, being careful not to push the tree into the stake. Use "tie tape"; this will help to avoid harming the bark of the tree. Tie the tape tightly around the stake, then loop it around the main stem of the tree in a figure "8". Tie off the loose end at the stake. The tie should be made about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the tree from the ground. The size of the tree will determine the number of stakes needed. For trees with a trunk diameter up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, use two stakes. For those with a diameter up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, use three stakes (see Figure 1).

For trees with a diameter greater than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, use the three point method. Use three short stakes, strong wire or

similar material, and three short lengths of tubing. The short stakes should be driven into the ground outside of the root ball. They should be placed in a triangular pattern around the base of the tree. Insert the wires through the tubing to protect the tree and secure the wires to the stakes and around the tree just above a main branch and at a point high enough to provide support. Make sure that the tubing rests against the trunk of the tree. The wires may be twisted to tighten them and hold the tree firmly in place. Strips of brightly colored cloth can be tied on the wires to keep people from tripping on them (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Staking smaller trees

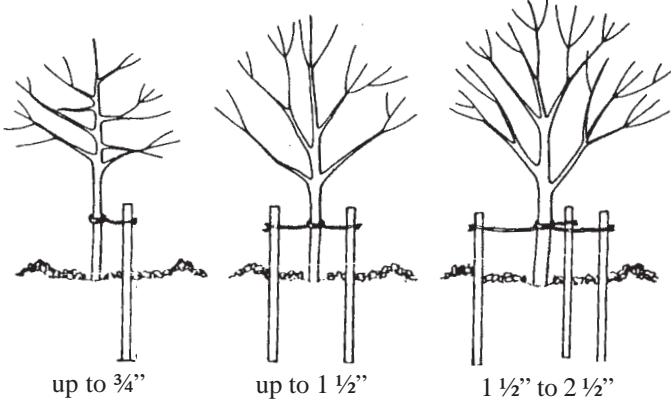


Figure 1. Staking larger trees

