

# Caring for Your New Tree

Transplant shock is common in newly transplanted trees. Trees may lose as much as 90% of their root system when it is removed from the nursery. As you can imagine, this causes a great deal of stress on the plant as it tries to reestablish itself. Your new tree is considered established when the root system has grown laterally a distance equal to approximately 3 times the distance from the trunk to the branch tips (Gilman 1988; Watson and Himelick 1982). During the establishment period, shoots and trunk grow slower than they did before transplanting.



**Water** is probably the most important element in caring for new trees. Since a newly transplanted tree has not extended its roots into the existing soil, adequate moisture needs to reach the root ball. Soil type and the amount of rainfall govern the amount of watering necessary. We recommend watering for 30 seconds with a rain head nozzle, every other day during the summer months.



**Mulch** is another important element in good plant health care maintenance. Maintain 2 inches of organic, composted mulch (wood chips, leaves, or pine bark) extending from the base of the plant out past the drip line (end of the branches) when possible. Do not let the mulch rest against the trunk of the tree. Trees benefit from mulch, because, as the mulch breaks down, it provides an excellent growing medium for roots, and acts as a slow release fertilizer. Mulch will also help conserve moisture, moderate soil temperatures, control weeds, and protect the trunk from mechanical injury; especially weed whips and lawn mowers.

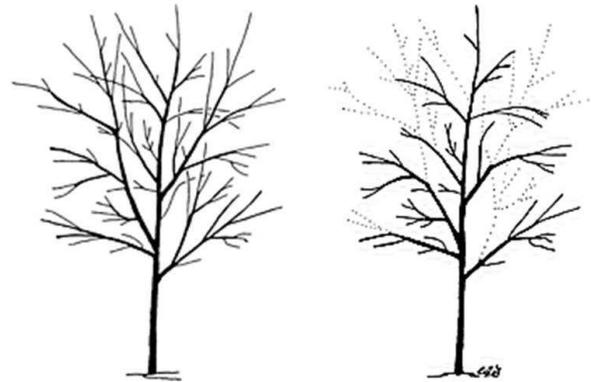


**Pruning** after planting should be limited to removing dead, rubbing, or broken branches only. Wait at least a year before removing any larger limbs or shaping the structure of the tree. Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation currently prunes street trees on a 7 year cycle. These young trees will benefit from pruning to improve structure on a more regular basis. If you will be pruning your new tree between our visits, please refer to

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/EP/EP31500.pdf>

We don't generally recommend installing **support systems** to recently planted trees, but occasionally trees may require support, especially in windy sites, to prevent uprooting and leaning until the roots have had a chance to grow and stabilize that tree. Avoid staking too rigidly. Some trunk flexibility allows the flare at the base of the tree to develop naturally.

Inspect staking material regularly for tightness and damage, and remove after one or two years. It is very important that the materials that you use to attach the support system to the tree are not abrasive to the bark.



Should you have any further questions concerning proper care for your new tree, please contact us at 427-6400