

**“A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.”**  
– an ancient Greek proverb

## Planting Your New Tree

### Step 1

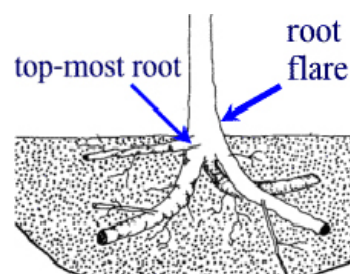
Look around. If there are overhead/underground utilities or buildings nearby that could interfere with proper development of the canopy as it grows, plant elsewhere. Call 811 to locate underground utilities!

### Step 2

Dig a shallow planting hole as wide as practical. Too shallow is better than too deep. In most cases, the depth of the hole should be LESS than the height of the soil within the container. A wider planting hole offers the newly emerging roots room to expand into the loosened soil. This will hasten root growth and result in quicker establishment.

### Step 3

Find the point where the top-most root emerges from the trunk. The top-most root should be located within 2 inches of the soil surface when planting is complete. It may be necessary to remove soil from the top of the ‘root ball’ to find the top most root.



### Step 4

Carefully remove the tree from the container and place it into the planting hole. If you see roots that have been influenced by the shape of the container (circling roots), now is the time to cut/remove them.

### Step 5

Position the point where the top-most root emerges from the trunk slightly above the surrounding soil surface. This may require removing or adding additional soil to your planting hole. Once the top most root is at the appropriate depth, pack some soil around the root ball to stabilize it. There is no need to ‘improve’ the existing soils, just use the soil that came out of the hole.

### Step 6

Straighten the tree in the hole. As you are backfilling the remaining hole, continue to check the tree from two directions to ensure that it remains straight. Step firmly on and use your shovel to break up the soil and remove large air pockets as you go. The top-most root should remain slightly above the surrounding grade.

### Step 7

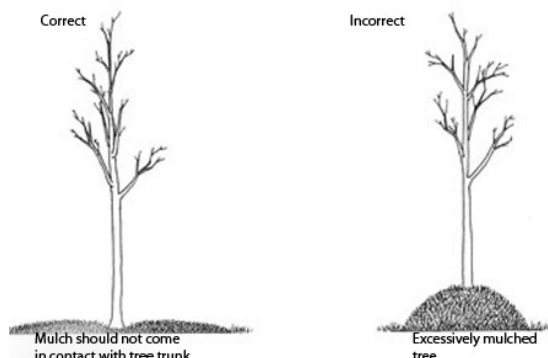
Slowly apply 10-20 gallons of water over the disturbed area. This gives your new tree its first drink of water AND fills in remaining airgaps with moistened soil. You may need to add additional soil to compensate for settling.

### Step 8

Mulch around the tree to at least the drip line—2 to 3 inches deep—and up to, but not touching the trunk. Do not over apply or mound the mulching materials around the trunk of the tree.

**To view a short video, visit:**

**[www.arborday.org/trees/planting/containerized.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/trees/planting/containerized.cfm)**



This program was made possible through a partnership of the following organizations.



# Caring for Your New Tree

## Water

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. Water for 30 seconds with a rain head nozzle, every other day during the dry summer months.

## Mulch

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.

## Staking

Staking is generally not recommended for 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 the 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.

## Congratulations on your new tree and thank you for helping FOREST THE FORT.

We invite you to share your accomplishment by posting a tree planting pic on social media. Use the hashtags #treesindiana and #forestthefort so we'll be sure to see them, too!

