



How to Plant Your Bare Root Trees

Congratulations on the purchase of your new trees from *Branch Out Burlington!* (BOB!) or wherever else! They are great additions to your yard and garden and contribute significantly to improving our environment. With proper planting and care they will offer you shade, beauty and in some cases, fruit, for many years.

When: Your trees should be planted as soon as possible and no more than 2 days after you get them. If they cannot be planted immediately, be sure the plastic bag around the roots stays tightly closed and store trees in a cool and shady place (an unheated garage, shed or basement is best), protected from the elements. **DO NOT LEAVE TREES IN THE SUN.** The roots of your trees were dipped in hydrogel, a non-toxic substance that retains moisture. This will help protect the roots from drying out until you get the tree in the ground.

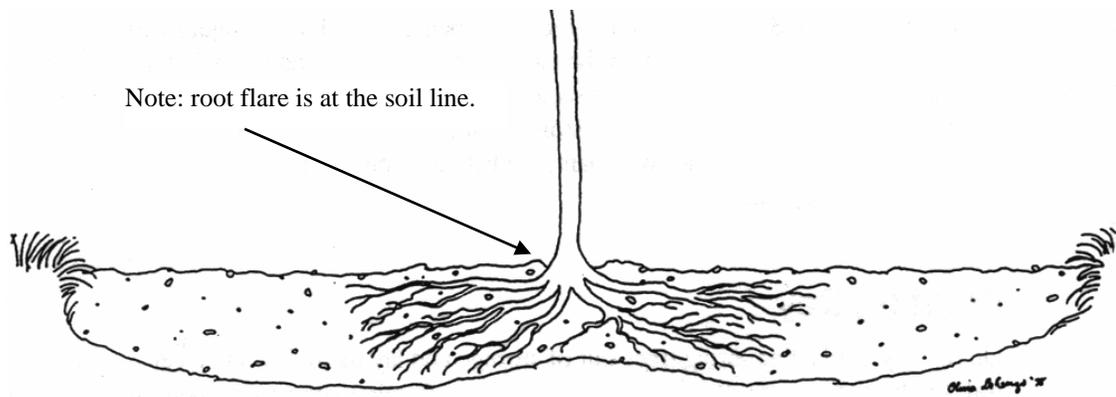
Location: Make sure you select the right site for your tree. Consider these factors: A tree's mature size and shape must fit the site and surrounding buildings. Do not plant trees too near building foundations or walls. Avoid planting under overhead wires and above under-ground utilities (consult Digsafe, <http://www.digsafe.com/>). If you plan to plant near the street or in a parking lot, keep snow removal plans in mind. Avoid windy locations. Space small maturing trees 15–20 ft. apart, large maturing trees 30 ft. apart. Refer to the web for recommendations for planting sites for your tree species:

https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/species_selection_v2.pdf

<https://www.arboday.org/trees/righttreeandplace/>

Planting:

1. Do not open the plastic bag wrapping until you are ready to plant, and only take the tree out when the hole is ready.
2. Do not expose the roots to wind or sunlight for even a short time.
3. Dig the planting hole wide and shallow--2-3 times wider in all directions than the root spread. Do not loosen the soil that will be underneath the root system; instead concentrate on creating loose soil horizontally for spreading out the roots. The beginning of the root flare (line between the stem and the start of the roots - usually visible as a distinct color change) should be at or just above the soil line after planting. This should be your guide for how deep to plant the tree.
4. Turf surrounding the tree should be completely removed so it doesn't compete with the newly planted tree for water.
5. Stand the tree up in the hole, and begin filling in with soil around its roots.
6. Fill only half-way, starting with the soil from closest to the surface because it has the most nutrients and this is your best chance to deliver those nutrients to the deepest, strongest roots.
7. Once the hole is half filled, water the soil in the hole to eliminate all air pockets.
8. Finish filling the hole, pack the soil down by foot or by hand and water again.
9. Make sure to plant the tree at the correct level (by looking for the root flare line). If it is planted too deep or too shallow, carefully unplant it and do it again. It is better for the tree to plant it correctly now. You want the soil around the tree to be slightly lower than the surrounding ground so that rainwater will run toward the tree, not away from it.
10. Build up a low ridge of soil around the outside boundary of the planting hole to hold water around the root area. This will ensure that the water doesn't run off during regular watering.
11. Do not place sod or grass seed over the soil as that will compete with the tree for nutrients and water. Instead, spread 2-4 inches of woodchips or shredded bark mulch. The further out away from the tree you mulch, the better.



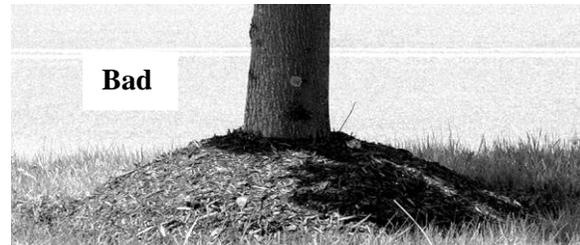
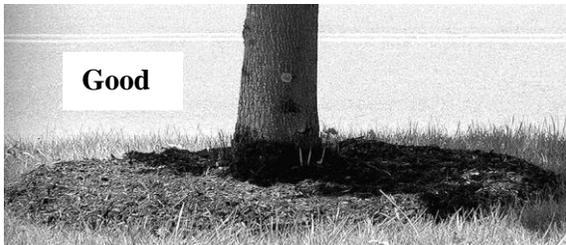
*Dig the planting hole shallow and wide, 2-3 times the diameter of the tree roots.
The beginning of the root flare should be at soil level.*

Staking: It is usually best to stake young trees for the first year, esp. if the tree seems a bit unsteady after planting because of the small root system relative to the tree canopy above. Keeping the stake on after one year is detrimental to proper growth, so make sure you remove the stake the following spring.

Watering: This is the most important part of establishing your new tree. You should water your new trees with at least 5 gallons of water 2-3 times per week for the first growing season (especially from July–September). Make sure the soil under the mulch is fully saturated with water. It is recommended that you use a treegator bag to hold the water, allowing it to drain out slowly. You can buy them from *BOB!* <https://branchoutburlington.org/programs/tree-sale/16th-annual-tree-sale/>



Mulching: Mulch should be maintained at a depth of 2–4 inches for several years after planting. Don't let mulch mound against the trunk since this could create a favorable environment for fungi.



Fertilizing and other Maintenance Tips: Do not fertilize your newly planted trees. Trim off broken branches or twigs, but do not prune the tree heavily. Refer to the VT Urban and Community Forestry website for advice on pruning and fertilizing: <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>

If you have additional questions, contact:

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Other Useful Websites:

www.branchoutburlington.org
<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>
<https://www.arborday.org/trees/tips/>

This information was compiled from several sources for distribution by Branch Out Burlington!.
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The *BOB!* mission is to plant and care for trees in and beyond Burlington and educate the public on the values of the urban forest. Our vision is a city graced with a variety of beautiful, healthy trees, and the community actively engaged with stewardship of the urban forest environment.