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PLANTING A BALLED AND BURLAPPED TREE:

Always hold the tree by the ball. Prepare the hole as above and place the tree in it. Cut away and remove any wire basket and cut burlap and remove it (without breaking the soil structure of the root ball). Synthetic burlap should also be completely removed. Backfill and water as above.

AFTER PLANTING:

- Mulch about 3 inches deep and as wide as the backfill area, but keep the mulch about an inch away from the tree trunk. Do NOT build mulch up the stem. Organic mulches are best and should be reapplied when they break down (every 2 – 3 years).
- Adequate watering is vital to tree success; about 1-2 inches every week is necessary during the first growing season, (about 10 gallons twice a week for a 2.5 inch caliper tree). Focus on watering the root ball not the backfill. Water must be given slowly to allow for proper absorption. Be aware of rainfall, extreme heat, etc. and adjust your watering accordingly.
- Staking is only necessary on extremely windy sites or in high-traffic areas. If you do need to stake your tree (only necessary with bareroot trees larger than 1/2 inch caliper) make sure there is flexibility for wind movement and to encourage stronger trunk development. Use two or three guys. Make sure stakes are driven into the ground outside the planting hole and cover any wire with garden hose to prevent damage to the tree. Remove guys after one growing season.
- Newly planted trees do not need to be fertilized the first year.
- Wrapping trees for protection is not recommended unless shelter is necessary for very young or tender trees. Burlap or snow fencing barriers will act as windbreaks. Hardware cloth is effective for wrapping tree trunks to protect from rodent damage if it is a problem. This should be checked each year and changed if necessary to accommodate tree growth.



HAPPY PLANTING!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE BEDFORD TREE
ADVISORY BOARD:
[http://www.bedfordny.info/html/
boards_tree_advisory.html](http://www.bedfordny.info/html/boards_tree_advisory.html)

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Town of Bedford
Tree Advisory Board



PLANNING
TO PLANT
A TREE?

SOME GUIDELINES
FOR SUCCESSFUL
TREE PLANTING IN
BEDFORD, NY

STEP 1: CHOOSE THE RIGHT TREE

- Make sure the tree is suited to grow in our zone (Bedford is in USDA Hardiness Zone 6).
- When buying the tree, with trees with a caliper larger than two inches, look for root flare at or just above the soil level (where the stem begins to branch out at the base and form roots). If this is not evident, the tree might be set too deep in its pot or root ball, which will cause problems later on.
- For smaller trees, hold the stem and move it around. You want the root ball to move along with it, with no air gaps that would indicate a weak root structure.
- Don't buy a plant with any damage, whether caused by disease, pests, bad pruning or mechanical damage.
- Make sure the tree has a good size root ball for its size. A large tree with a small root ball may not survive as its root structure may have been trimmed too much.
- Avoid trees that have a lot of disease or maintenance problems. For example, Norway maples produce a lot of seeds and can become invasive in natural areas. They are also susceptible to several diseases and pests. Bradford pears form weak crotches that are susceptible to breakage. (There are other cultivars of callery pear that have stronger branching structures.) Ash trees are susceptible to ash decline and the emerald ash borer and should be avoided.

STEP 2: CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOT

It is important to have the right tree in the right place.

- Make sure there is nothing that would prevent your tree's roots from growing – these might be large rocks, pavement, driveways, or even a building. In general, a tree's roots will grow further out than its branch structure. Most trees need a soil depth of about three feet.
- Make sure there is nothing that would interfere with your tree's upward and outward growth – overhead wires, for instance, or a building.



- Roots cannot grow in heavily compacted or poorly drained soil. Compaction is caused by heavy pedestrian traffic and construction machinery.
- The soil needs to be suitable for the tree you choose. If you have very sandy or heavy clay soil make sure you plant trees that can grow in that soil.

- Know how well drained the site is. Some trees do better in poorly drained areas than others. Be aware of the effects on the site of a downspout or an irrigation system.
- Test your soil pH to make sure your tree is suitable. Most trees tolerate a wide range in pH but it is better to know ahead of time what you are dealing with.
- Watch out for road salt. If your site is near a road that gets salted, choose a tree that can tolerate those conditions.

STEP 3: CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME

- In Bedford trees can be planted in spring or fall. Follow the instructions on the tag. In very exposed sites, or where conditions are not ideal for the tree, it is better to plant in spring.
- Otherwise, fall is the best time for most trees because the tree puts more energy into root development than growing shoots as daylight shortens.
- Plant early enough in the fall (ideally from mid-September and latest by November 1) so the roots have time to develop (several weeks of 60 – 70 degree soil temperatures) and so that water doesn't freeze around the root ball soon after planting.
- Evergreens planted in late fall must be given a 2 – 4 inch mulch and screening from harsh sun and wind.
- If you **MUST** plant in summer, make sure you water the newly planted tree regularly.

PLANTING PROCEDURE

If you can't plant immediately, store the tree in a shady spot and keep it well watered.

Dig the hole **ONLY** as deep as the root ball (to avoid planting the tree too deep) and three times as wide, creating a hole with gradually sloping sides for easy root development. (Most root growth happens near the surface.) Break up the soil along the side of the hole to facilitate root penetration.

Now is the time to add any additional nutrients (which should only be added if soil tests indicate a need.) These should be added to the soil that you removed when digging the hole and which will be returned around the root ball in backfill. Do **NOT** add fertilizer with nitrogen, which will injure young roots and could kill the tree.

PLANTING A TREE GROWN IN A CONTAINER:

The roots may be cramped in the container and should be teased out to encourage them to grow away from the root ball and into the soil. If they can't be pulled out, use a knife to cut about four vertical slashes around the root ball before planting.

Make sure the root flare (where the roots start to emerge from the trunk) is just above the soil level. Planting too deep or not deep enough will cause problems later.

Place tree in the soil and add backfill to about half way up. Water to settle the soil and then add the rest of the backfill. Create a saucer with the last of the backfill soil, a little more than the width of the roots, to use as a catchment for water. Water very slowly to allow thorough absorption. Remove any tags to avoid damage to tree trunk or branches.

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