

Root Pruning

A Must Do Before Planting!

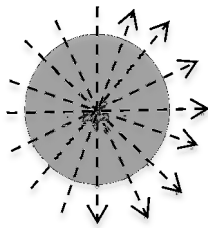
The most important step before you plant your new container-grown tree or shrub is to root prune the root ball to correct matted/circling roots. This is true for any size container-grown plant material from a #1 to a #25 pot. Root prune extremely aggressively!

Steps to proper Root Pruning:

1. Remove the plant from the container by sliding the pot off of the root ball.
2. Use a sharp utility knife to slice into the root ball making 1" deep cuts from top to bottom every 1" to 2" to eliminate circling or heavily matted roots. Use many cuts!
3. Lay the plant down and slice the bottom of the root ball in a star pattern 1" deep.

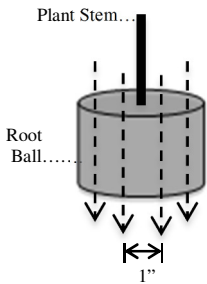
Side View:

Make your cuts at least 1" deep, every 1" to 2" around the root ball.



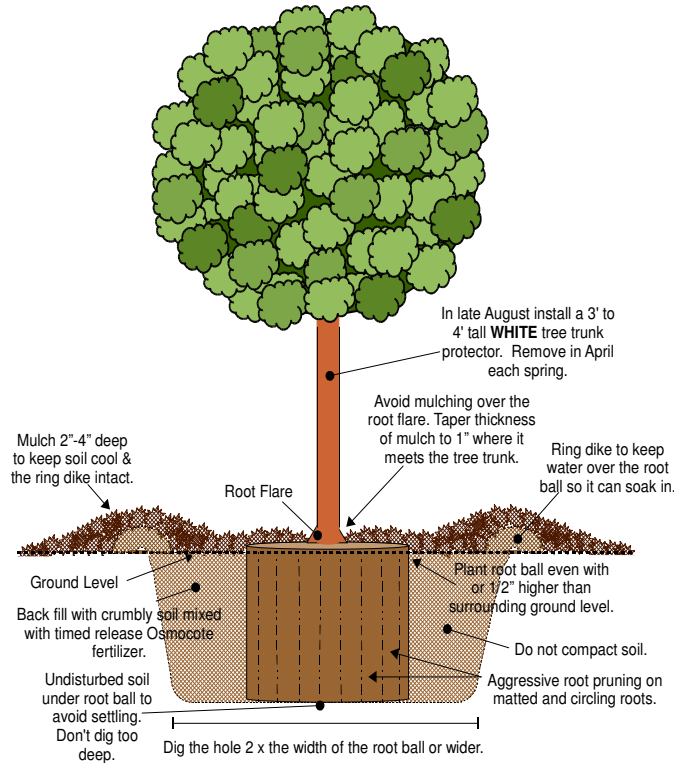
Bottom View:

A star pattern of cuts 1" deep across the bottom of the root ball.



Root pruning will help to eliminate circling roots that could strangle your plants in future years, causing premature death. Root pruning will stimulate new root growth and help your plant to establish an open and vigorous root system more quickly in its new location. Be aggressive. You will be helping, not hurting, the future of your plant.

Container Tree, Shrub & Perennial Planting




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PLANTING & CARE GUIDE

FOR POTTED PLANT MATERIAL



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Planting Instructions

- Root Pruning
- Soil Amendment
- Mulching & Staking
- Fertilizing

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Planting Instructions

*The proper steps to planting container grown plant material**

*Step by step DIY/“How To” planting videos at knechts.net

Digging The Hole:

We recommend that the hole be dug **at least** twice as wide as the root ball and only as deep as the root ball height. Back filling will provide loose soil around the root ball, allowing the freshly pruned roots to grow easily into the surrounding soil. Avoid compacting soil.

Root Pruning: A MUST DO!

Please see “Root Pruning, A Must Do Before Planting” on the back of this sheet.

Planting Depth:

Planting depth is a very important part of the planting process. It is much safer to err on the side of slightly too high rather than too deep. Plant so that the root ball surface is slightly (1/2”) higher than or even with the ground around it. Some symptoms of planting too deep are stunted growth, deformed trunk, rotting bark, and a slow death.

Backfilling & Soil Amendments:

With the plant at the proper depth, you should back fill using the original soil dug from the hole mixed with timed release Osmocote fertilizer. Heavy, compacted, or poor soils may benefit from the addition of some soil amendments like compost, peat moss, fertilizer, sand or black dirt. Use only 20% - 30% amendment(s) evenly blended with the soil dug from the hole. Backfill with this mixture and/or the mixture of existing soil and Osmocote fertilizer. Do not compact backfill soil. A few waterings will settle the backfill soil.

Some plants prefer a specific type of soil to thrive. For example, blueberry, magnolia, azalea, rhododendron and other plants require a more

acidic soil. To increase acidity we recommend that you amend the planting site soil as thoroughly as possible with **sphagnum** peat moss to provide the acidity needed.

Creating a watering ring dike:

Once planted, make a 1” to 3” high ring dike of soil around the plant, slightly wider than the root ball to keep water where it will soak into the root zone. You will place your mulch right over the top of this soil ring dike to prevent the dike from washing away during the first year. After a year, pull back the mulch, smooth out the remaining soil ring, and replace the mulch.

Mulching:

Mulch provides your plants with many benefits. We recommend that plants be mulched immediately after planting. A 2”-4” layer of mulch (shredded bark or wood chips are ideal) will help retain soil moisture, prevent wide fluctuations of soil temperature in the root zone, suppress most weed growth, and prevent mechanical damage by keeping weed whips and mowers from nicking the bark. In most cases, place organic mulches directly on the soil surface. **Before placing mulch, kill all weeds and grass to prevent re-sprouting.** If you are using rock mulch we recommend you use a high quality porous landscape fabric under the rock rather than heavy-duty plastic. Gases, water, and nutrients are able to move through **porous** landscape fabric; plastic does not allow this.

Watering:

Proper watering is extremely important, especially in the first few months. We have **very** detailed watering instructions on the blue sheet. Please follow them closely. **Consistent, but not excessive watering is key to success.** Be aware that you can drown plants by over watering.

Recycling:

Please return any fiberglass stakes and all sizes of “Air Prune” pots to our nursery. We will

reuse them. We also accept empty good condition standard plastic pots from 3 gallon to 25 gallon sizes. Many communities (Including Northfield) now offer recycling for black plastic nursery pots that are 1 gallon size or smaller. This would include the small plastic pots and 4 packs from bedding plants. We appreciate your help recycling/reusing plastic pots. Think Green!

Fertilizing:

For new plantings we recommend a moderate dose of timed release Osmocote fertilizer evenly mixed with your backfill soil. **DO NOT OVER FERTILIZE!!!** This burns plant roots causing damage. Follow package directions.

For established plants spring is a great time to fertilize, that’s when plants have their greatest need for nutrients. Apply one dose each spring of Osmocote fertilizer to the soil’s surface around the base of established plant(s). We do not recommend that you continue to actively fertilize after August 1st, because the plants need to wind down to dormancy in preparation for winter.

Insect Control:

A proactive approach to insect and disease control is wise to prevent damage to plants susceptible to boring insects and other pests. Emerald Ash Borer, Bronze Birch Borer, Oak Borer, Aphids, Scale, White Flies, Japanese Beetle, Fungus, Mildew and Mites are examples. Knechts’ staff can answer questions you may have about control measures. There are many products available to control pests and diseases, both organic and conventional.

Staking:

For plants that won’t stand straight, staking for a limited time, not to exceed one year, can be beneficial. Staking allows plants to establish a strong root system in the surrounding soil without tearing new tender roots during storms, and helps assure a straight tree. Remove all staking materials after a year or re-tie them to accommodate any new growth that has occurred.