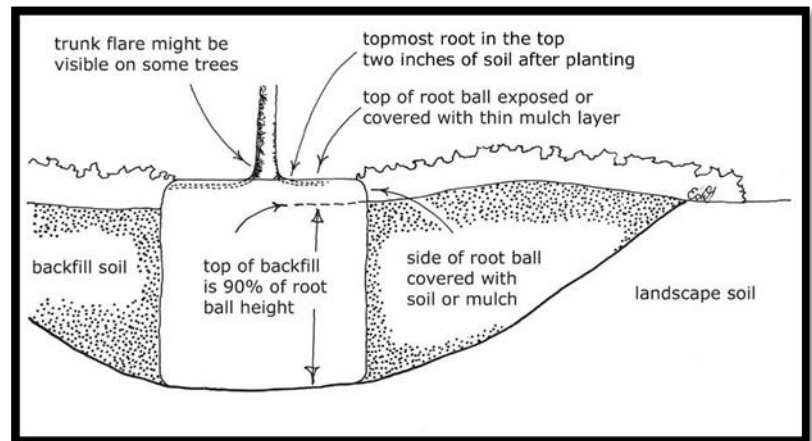


## PLANTING YOUR NATIVE TREE OR SHRUB

1. **Select a site where your tree or shrub can thrive.** Know whether it needs sun or shade, wet soil or dry, and how big it will be when fully grown. Plant the specimen where its roots will have ample space to grow. Look up. Check for overhead wires, building eaves or anything else that could interfere with your tree as it grows.
2. **Call 811** before you dig to avoid underground utilities. It's the law!
3. **Before digging the hole, measure the distance between the topmost root and the bottom of the root ball.** Dig the hole about 10% less than this distance and as wide as possible (at least 1½ times the width of the root ball). Remove the plant from the container. Gently scrap away any excess layer of soil that's above the base of the trunk where the roots and trunk merge. (The topmost root should be within the top two inches of soil after planting.)

4. **Cut circling or girdling roots**, where appropriate.

5. **Position the root ball in the hole** so the finished grade of the landscape soil is even with or slightly lower than the point where the topmost root emerges from the trunk. In poorly drained soil, place the top of the root ball 10% or more above the surrounding landscape soil.



6. **Fill in the hole with the landscape soil.** Do not add soil amendments such as organic matter, potting soil or quick-release fertilizer. Quick release fertilizer may burn tender roots. Adding slow-release fertilizer has not been associated with either improved survival or increased growth at planting.

7. **Add mulch.** Make sure that there is no landscape soil and little or no mulch placed on top of the root ball (within a foot of the trunk). Mulch should never be placed directly against the trunk of a tree or shrub. However, a 2" – 3" deep layer of mulch placed in a ring around the plant will protect it from damage from mowers and power equipment and also from competition from turfgrass and weeds. The minimum diameter of the mulch ring should be 8' for young trees or shrubs that have a trunk diameter of less than 3."

8. **Saturate the soil at planting to remove air pockets.** Plants also need *a lot* of water to establish new roots.

9. **Staking may not be necessary if root balls are heavy enough to stabilize the tree or shrub.** However, some container-grown trees will require staking in open areas because their root balls are much lighter in weight. Visit the link below to view proper staking techniques. Be sure to remove any stakes once the tree or shrub is stabilized to avoid damage to the plant.

10. **Take care of your plant during the establishment period.** Recently transplanted trees and shrubs establish more quickly with lighter, more frequent irrigation. Water your tree or shrub daily for the first two weeks, every other day for the next two months, and then weekly until established to ensure vigorous growth. As a general rule, trees take three to six months per inch of trunk diameter to establish. Trees that do not receive adequate irrigation during the establishment period may require additional time to grow an adequate root system. Be sure your trees get enough water, especially during drought. Certain water-loving species may require more irrigation to establish. These species should be planted in lower areas on your property where they will receive enough moisture to survive on their own after establishment.

For more information on planting specifications, visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep112>

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