

Tree Planting Cue Card

provided by *Roots Plus Growers*

- 1 Start with a quality grade tree as specified in the Florida Grades & Standards for Nursery Stock.



- Select trees with a quality trunk form, branch arrangement and canopy uniformity.

- 2 Check for root system quality.

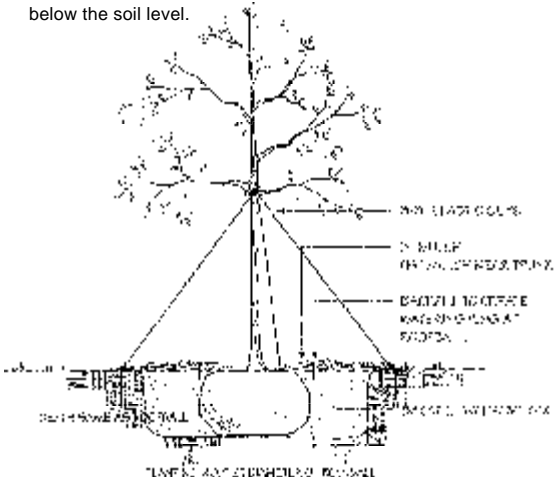
- Field-grown (B&B) trees should be hardened-off or pre-dug at the nursery until new roots are visible through the burlap.
- Trees should be solid in the rootball.
- Check for kinked and/or circling roots and cut them if present.

- 3 Tree shipping and unloading.

- Trees should be protected during shipping by a tarp or shipped in an enclosed truck.
- Trees should never be lifted by the trunk. Lift using rootball straps or container handles.
- On the job site, store trees upright, in the shade, and irrigate twice daily with 5 gallons per caliper inch applied directly to the rootball until planting.
- Do not store trees on asphalt.

- 4 Planting hole preparation.

- Prepare the planting hole twice as wide as the rootball and slightly less than the depth of the rootball.
- Dig the planting hole shallower in areas with wet soil conditions and backfill up to the edge of the rootball.
- In no case should the first root emerging from the trunk be below the soil level.



5 Tree preparation.

- Remove the black weed cloth liner, plastic wrap, or container.
- Remove any string, strapping, or wire wrapped around the trunk.
- Cut any circling roots prior to planting.

6 Tree planting.

- Place the tree in the center of the hole with the top most root in the rootball at or slightly higher than the finished landscape grade.
- Check to ensure the tree is straight in the hole, and begin filling in with native field soil.
- Water in the backfill as you fill the planting hole, working the soil to ensure that no air pockets remain.

7 Finishing planting.

- At the edge of the rootball, make a soil berm 2-3" high to form a shallow water holding area. Water immediately after planting with 5 gallons of water per caliper inch.
- Apply a 3" inch layer of mulch to an area 2 feet in diameter per trunk caliper inch.
- Do not pile mulch directly against the tree trunk.

8 Irrigation requirements for establishment.

- Use low volume drip irrigation for optimum growth & survival.
- If an automatic system is not used, a strict irrigation schedule is necessary for survival.

Tree Size: 2-4" caliper

Irrigation for vigor - Daily for 1 month; every other day for 3 months; weekly until established.

Irrigation for survival - Twice weekly for 3-4 months.

Tree Size: >4" caliper

Irrigation for vigor - Daily for 6 weeks; every other day for 5 months; weekly until established.

Irrigation for survival - Twice weekly for 4-5 months.

- At each irrigation, apply 3 gallons per inch trunk caliper to the rootball. For example, apply 9 gallons on a 3" caliper tree. Apply in a manner so all water soaks into the rootball.
- Establishment takes 3 to 4 months per inch trunk caliper. In drought conditions irrigate the following summer.

Important Planting Notes

- ☞ The best soil amendment for successful planting is water. Research has shown no benefit to using other soil amendments.
- ☞ Place no soil over the rootball at planting. Deep planting kills trees.

This tree planting cue card was provided to you courtesy of the Roots Plus Field Growers Association of Florida

Growing Quality Field-Grown Trees



www.rootspusgrowers.org