

Planting Caliper Trees

Step 1: Getting Ready

- ✓ Make sure the tree you choose is suited for the location you have chosen. Some trees thrive in wet locations while others will suffer; some flourish in rich soil while others do best in sandy soil.
- ✓ Have some extra garden soil (a mix of 1 part compost to 2 parts topsoil) on hand to backfill the hole.

Step 2: Preparing the Hole

- ✓ Millcreek Nursery staff will give you the dimensions of the basket that your tree is in. It is important to dig the hole 6-8" wider than the top of the root ball and the sides should taper down to the bottom. Dig the hole to dimensions given and no deeper. **Correct planting depth is critical!** Planting too deep can suffocate the roots.



*Hole measures 6" wider than the top of the basket (root ball).

Step 3: Planting

- ✓ Measure the root ball and the hole before sliding the tree into place to double-check depth. Lifting a very heavy tree back out of the hole because of improper depth is not fun! Scatter approximately 2 cups of bone meal into the hole.



*Use the end of the shovel or a tape measure to measure the depth of the root ball and the depth of the hole.

- ✓ Slide the tree carefully into the hole. **Do not remove the basket or burlap** and be careful not to disturb the root ball too much. Straighten the tree in the hole by grabbing onto the basket or use a pry bar and adjust it accordingly. Do not straighten a tree by pulling or pushing on the trunk as this can loosen up the tree in the root ball. Back fill with some of the soil mix packing it around the root ball as you go to stabilize. Only fill the hole about half way.



*Tree in hole at proper planting depth.

- ✓ Cut and remove the white strapping that wraps around the trunk and is tied to the wire loops. Bend the wire loops back into the hole (they can also be cut off if you wish to do so) and proceed to unwrap the burlap that is wrapped around the trunk. Remove just the top burlap as the rest of the burlap on the side will quickly decompose.



- ✓ Finish packing the soil mix around the sides of the root ball.



- ✓ Build a berm around the tree as wide as the original basket to hold water. Water well, allowing water to slowly saturate the soil. A liquid transplant fluid should be used. There should be 3 applications spaced 2-3 weeks apart.



- ✓ Newly planted trees should be staked for 2 years. Leaf trees should be staked in the direction of prevailing winds (generally our prevailing winds are NW and SE). They should be tied 3-4' above the ground using a proper tree strap. Evergreens should be staked on three sides. Be sure to check periodically that the tree straps are not cutting into the trunk.
- ✓ Leave the top of the root ball exposed for the first season so the moisture level of the root ball can be easily checked. After the first season, a thin layer (about 2") of mulch can be applied.
- ✓ To water newly planted trees, check to see if the soil is dry 2-3" down. If the soil is dry, water. A 2" caliper tree will require about 15 gallons of water. During dry, hot weather, check every 5 days. It is best to water by placing a garden hose on the root ball and let the water trickle out about the size your little finger.
- ✓ Note: Be aware that when a tree looks wilted it may be from either too much or too little water. If your tree looks wilted and you water it well the leaves should perk up in a few hours. If not, the problem is too much water, not too little. Mountain Ash, Schubert Chokecherry, Amur Cherry, Mayday, Spruce and Pine are a few species that are sensitive to too much water. Be aware of sites where water pools.
- ✓ **Do not use landscape fabric, add soil, mulch or plant shrubs, perennials, annuals, etc. on top of newly planted trees. The top of the root ball should be left exposed so the roots can get the oxygen they need and you are able to monitor the moisture level in the soil.**