

“How To Plant” Checklist



GETTING READY

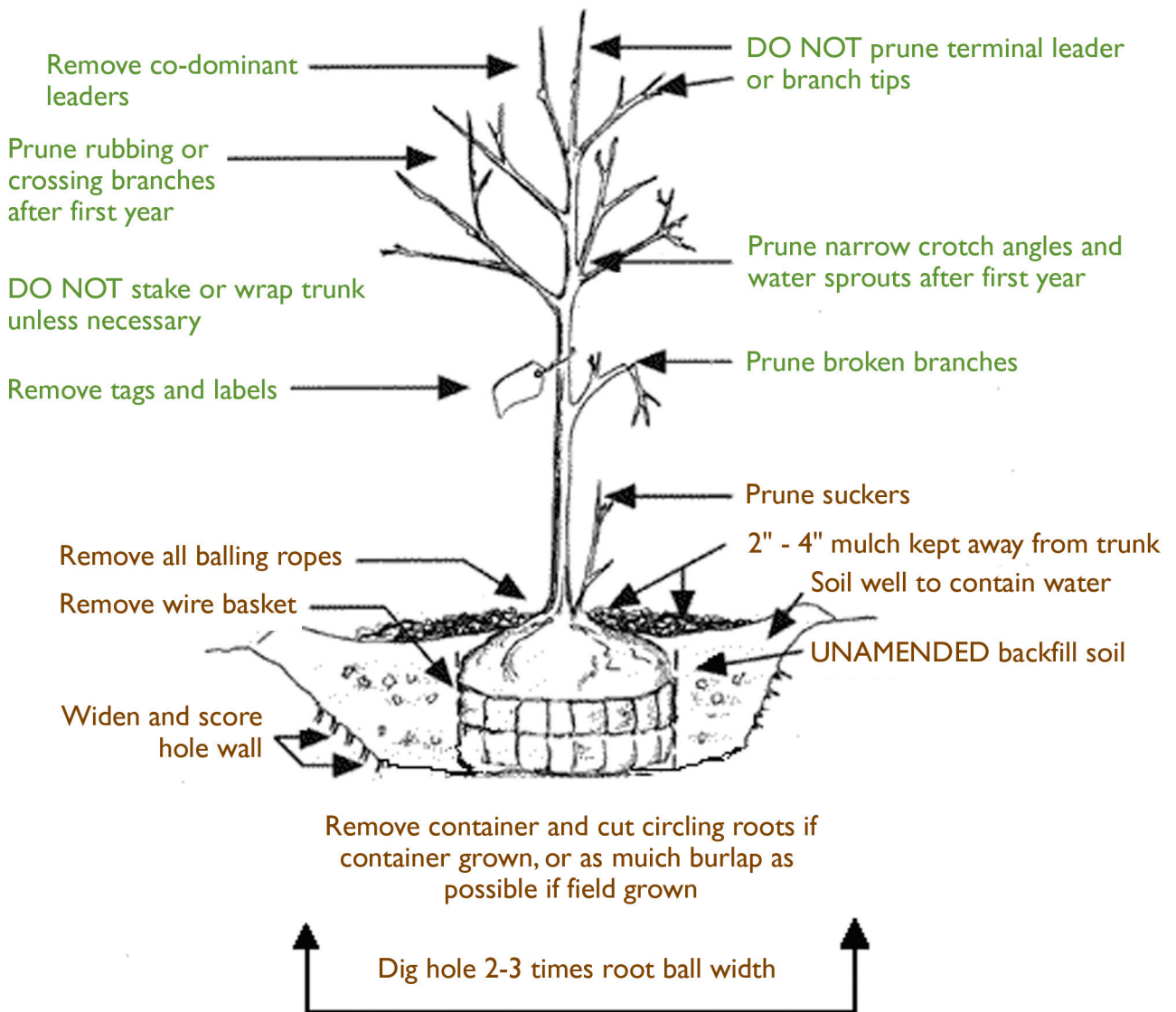


- ☐ American Forest or any organization you work with will have information on planting trees and which trees and planting seasons are suitable for your local area.
- ☐ When you contact the N.A.C.D. (National Association of Conservation Districts) to buy your trees, ask for a tree-planting guide for your area.
- ☐ Build relationships with local gardeners and foresters and greenhouses as you ask advice about planting and nurturing the right trees for your region.
- ☐ The ideal time to plant a tree is during a dormant condition, either in early spring before bud-break, or in the fall, after leaves drop.
- ☐ One option is to plant a “nursery” of several trees in a smaller area where they are close to each other, so it is easier to care for your trees until they get bigger, when you can transplant them.
- ☐ Before you begin planting your tree, be sure you have had **all underground utilities located** prior to digging the hole. Check for utility location services at least two days prior to digging.

PLANTING A TREE STEP-BY-STEP



- 1. Dig a shallow, broad planting hole.** Make the hole as wide as reasonably possible (as much as 3 times the width of the root ball), but only as deep as the root ball. You should have a minimum of 12 inches of loosened soil on all sides of the root ball. It is important to make the hole wide, as new roots will expand more quickly into loose soil. Most urban soils are compacted and unsuitable for healthy root growth.
- 2. Identify the trunk flare.** The trunk flare is the part of the trunk where the roots spread out at the base of the tree. This point should be visible after the tree has been planted. If the trunk flare is not visible, you may have to remove some soil from the top of the root ball prior to planting the tree. This is critical in determining how deep the hole should be for proper planting. *(See illustration next page.)*
- 3. Remove the pot** or container from around the soil ball. If planting a balled and burlaped tree with a wire basket, cut the bottom out of the basket prior to placing the tree into the hole. It will be easier to remove the basket from the root ball prior to backfilling if you only have to cut the sides of the basket after it is in the hole.



- 4. Place the tree at the proper depth.** Before putting the tree in the hole, check to see that the hole has been dug to the proper depth. The majority of the roots on a newly planted tree will develop within the top 12" of soil. If the tree is planted too deep, new roots may not develop due to lack of oxygen. It is better to plant the tree slightly high (one to two inches above the base of the trunk flare), than to plant it at or below the original growing level. This will allow for some settling. To avoid damage when setting the tree into the hole, always lift the tree by the root ball, never by the trunk.
- 5. Straighten the tree in the hole.** Before you begin backfilling, view the tree from several directions to confirm it is straight. Once you have begun to backfill, it is difficult to reposition.
- 6. Fill the hole with soil.** Fill the hole about one-third full and gently (but firmly) tamp the soil around the base of the root ball. At this time, the wire basket can be removed, and all string and wire should be removed from around the trunk. Fill the remainder of the hole, taking care to pack the soil to eliminate air pockets that could cause roots to dry out. Water tamping (adding soil and settling it with water) is an acceptable, but messy, method of accomplishing this.

7. Stake the tree (if necessary). If the tree is firm within the soil ball, and the top is generally in proportion to the size of the root ball, staking may not be necessary. Studies have shown that trees will establish more quickly and develop stronger trunk and root systems if they are not staked at the time of planting. However, protective staking may be required on sites where lawn mower damage, vandalism or windy conditions are concerns. Support staking and ties should be removed after one growing season. A wide, flexible tying material should be used so that injury to the trunk is minimized.

8. Mulch the base of the tree. Mulch is simply organic matter applied to the base of the tree. It serves to hold moisture, moderate soil temperatures, reduce competition from grasses and weed and reduces mechanical injury from mowers and string trimmers. A two to four inch thick layer is ideal. Care should be taken not to cover the trunk of the tree with mulch, as it can cause decay of the bark at the base of the tree.

FOLLOW-UP CARE



- ☐ Keep the soil moist, but not soaked. Over watering will cause leaves to turn yellow or fall off.
- ☐ Water trees at least once a week (unless significant rain is received), and more frequently during hot, dry weather.
- ☐ When the soil is dry beneath the surface of the mulch, it is time to water.
- ☐ Other follow-up care may include minor pruning of branches that were damaged during the planting process. Wait to begin corrective pruning until after the first season of growth in the new location.
- ☐ Fertilization is not recommended during the first growing season. Low nitrogen, slow release fertilizer is suggested for fertilization in subsequent years.

Don't forget to take lots of pictures for posterity. Imagine what fun it will be to see your tree five years, ten years, and dozens of years into the future! How big will it grow?

Protect and nurture your trees. Remember that Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement paid a small stipend to women only for trees that lived and flourished. Planting is only the first step.

Shaklee wishes to thank the dedicated Distributors who have started tree-planting programs in their communities and who contributed these guidelines for Distributors everywhere.