



Tree Planting: A Quick Guide for Homeowners

A.G.B. Hunsberger

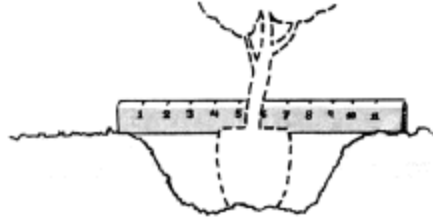
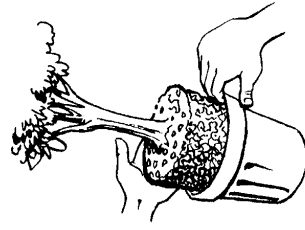
This publication is meant for homeowners planting trees on their own property

1. **Before digging**, call 1-800-432-4770 for a free underground utility check. Accidentally cutting an underground utility is costly and potentially dangerous. Also check to see where your septic system is if you have one. Avoid planting near it.
2. **Location**. To cool your house, choose to plant trees to shade the eastern, southern, and western exposed walls of your house. Small trees can be planted 10' – 16' from the house. Large trees can be planted 16' – 22' from the house.
3. **Look up**. Don't plant under utility lines unless the mature size of your plant will be shorter than the height of the line.
4. **Do your homework**. Call the University of Florida/Miami-Dade Extension office (305-248-3311 x 228) for recommended trees for your site and needs.
 - a. Buy quality plants.
 - b. Buy trees with only 1 trunk except for small trees such as crape myrtles.
 - c. Don't buy pot-bound plants.
 - d. Make sure that your choices are not on the prohibited plant list for the county.
 - e. Palm trees don't provide much shade. Use them in groups or in narrow areas.
5. **Digging the hole**. Hire a tree hole digger if needed. Make sure the planting hole is no deeper and 2 - 3 times wider than the root ball of the plant.

Planting and maintenance is critical to the health of your plants.

6. **Planting**.
 - a. Never handle the plant by the trunk. Carry it by the pot.

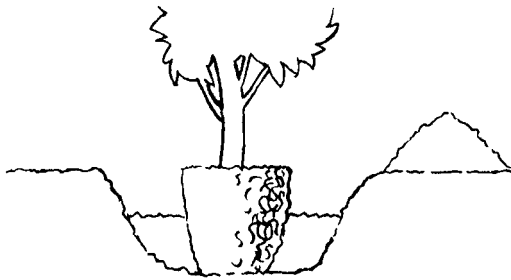
- b. After removing the pot, gently loosen roots and cut circling roots. If pot-bound, make several 1 – 2 inch deep slices down the sides of the root ball.
- c. Position the plant in the hole so that the top of the root ball is even with the soil surface.



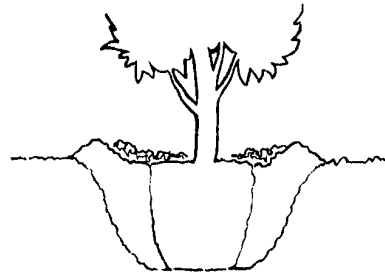
- d. If the tree is balled and in natural burlap, remove the top 1/3 of the burlap after planting the tree in the hole. If the root ball is wrapped in synthetic burlap, remove all of it after setting the tree in the hole. Remove any twine or rope that is around the trunk.



- e. Fill the hole with soil that was removed to make the planting hole. Do not add any other materials (such as organic matter, potting soil, fertilizer, etc.) to the soil. They are not needed.
- f. When the hole is half full of soil, saturate with water to remove air pockets, then fill the hole until it's even with the ground level.



- g. Build a 3" high circular berm around the outer edge of the planting hole.



7. **Watering.** Water deeply and thoroughly.

8. **Mulch.** Use an organic mulch such as eucalyptus, Enviro-Mulch (melaleuca), or pine bark, two to three inches deep over the entire planting area. Keep the mulch at least 2 inches away from the trunk.
9. **Tree staking.** Stake the tree only if needed. If it is top heavy, unstable, or in a windy location, stake the tree. Remove the stakes 1 year after planting.

Tree Maintenance

10. **Watering schedule.** For well-drained soils after planting -
 - Week 1: water the root ball every day for the first week by filling the planting basin
 - Weeks 2-5: fill the basin every 2 days
 - Weeks 6-12: once a week

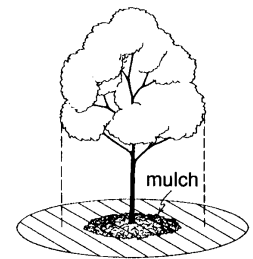


OR

- a. For large trees continue to water once per week for 1 – 2 years.
- b. Less water may be required in winter.
- c. For soils that are not well-drained, water less frequently. Use your best judgment.
- d. The root ball should be kept moist but not wet.

11. Fertilization schedule.

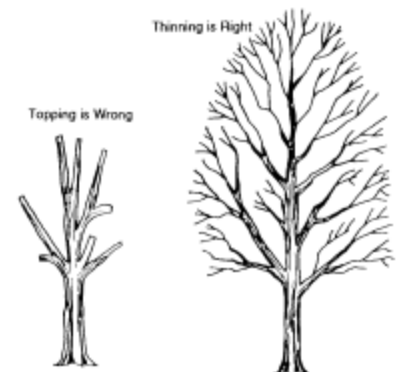
- a. Broadcast the fertilizer under the drip line of the tree canopy but not close to the trunk.
- b. Six months after planting, apply a light feeding with a balanced, complete slow-release fertilizer.
- c. After the first year, fertilize three times per year (spring, summer, and early fall).
- d. Some palms have special fertilizer requirements.



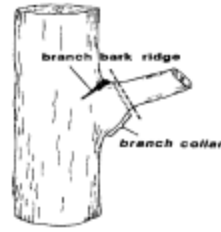
apply fertilizer to this area

12. Pruning.

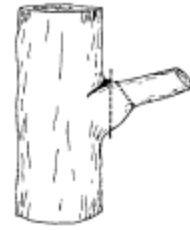
- a. Don't prune until 1 year after planting unless to remove dead or damaged limbs.
- b. Never hat-rack or top trees. It's illegal and harmful to the long-term health of the tree. The tree will also be susceptible to damage from high winds. Instead, thin out the canopy to allow wind to blow through.



- c. Trim branches properly (not flush cut).
- d. Don't apply tree wound paints.



RIGHT



WRONG

13. **Never injure the trunk with weed-eaters or lawnmowers .**

14. **Don't plant flowering plants that need watering under trees.**

References

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Tree Planting, A Quick Guide for Homeowners
 By Adrian Hunsberger
 Extension Agent II – Urban Horticulture
 Miami-Dade County

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Reviewed by Dr. R.J. Black and revised June 2001

University of Florida /Miami-Dade County Extension
 18710 SW 288th Street; Homestead. FL 33030-2932
 Voice (305) 248-3311 x 228; FAX (305) 246-2932

