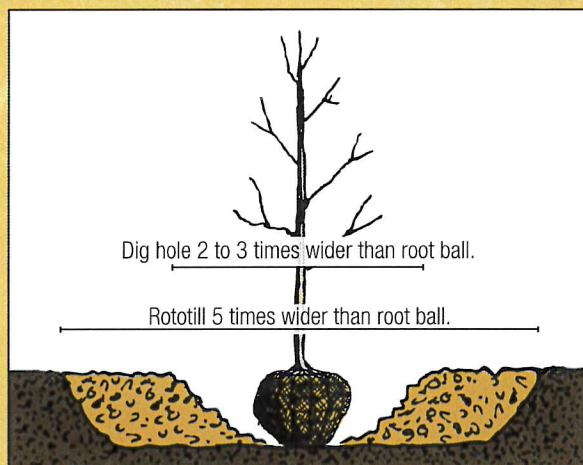# How to Plant Balled and Burlapped Trees

Use these instructions for planting trees that have their root ball wrapped in burlap.

1 You'll need to dig a saucer-shaped hole. If you can, rototill an area five times the diameter and as deep as the root ball. The prepared soil will make the hole easier to dig and encourage root growth. Measure the depth of the root ball to make sure the root collar will be at or a little above ground level when your tree is planted.

2 Dig the hole 2 or 3 times as wide and as deep as the root ball. The hole should have sloping sides, and don't disturb the soil at the bottom of the hole.

Dig hole 2 to 3 times wider than root ball.

Rototill 5 times wider than root ball.

3 Set the tree in the center of the hole. When moving the tree, handle it by the root ball. Don't move or lift the tree by the trunk as this can cause the root ball to separate from the trunk. Check the planting depth. If the root collar is

below ground level, compact some soil under the root ball to bring the root collar up to slightly above ground level.

4 Once the tree is in position, use wire cutters to cut vertically up the side the wire basket and peel it away. Remove all the rope and twine from the ball and all the nails that hold the burlap together. Pull the burlap back and cut away any loose material. Don't worry about regular burlap under the root ball. It can stay put. But vinyl or treated burlap should be removed completely.

5 Make sure your tree is straight and then firmly pack the original soil around the root ball making sure there aren't any air pockets. Keep backfilling until the soil is just below the root collar.

6 Create a water-holding basin around the tree and give the tree a good watering. After the water has soaked in, spread protective mulch 2-4 inches deep covering the entire area of backfilled soil, keeping the mulch 4 inches away from the trunk.

protective mulch

7 The soil and mulch around your trees should be kept moist but not soggy. During dry weather, generously water the tree every 7 to 10 days during the first year. Water slowly at the dripline.

8 Remove any tags and labels from the tree as these will affect the tree as it grows. You may need to prune any broken or dead branches. (Please refer to the **arborday.org** pruning guide.)

For step by step videos and more planting info go to **arborday.org/HowToPlant**

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