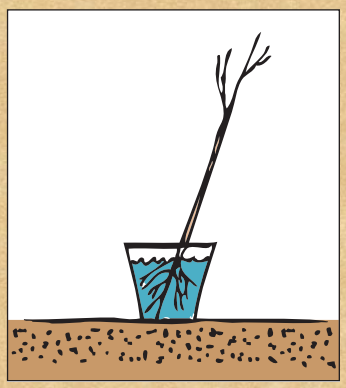
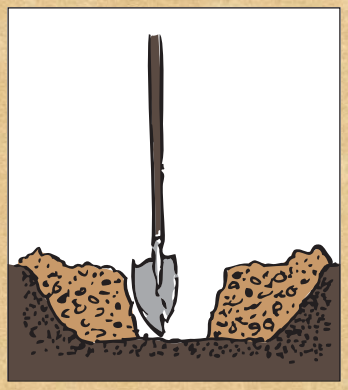
How to Plant Bare-root Trees

Members: Please also see "Important Notes for Planting Your 10 Free Trees" on the reverse side.

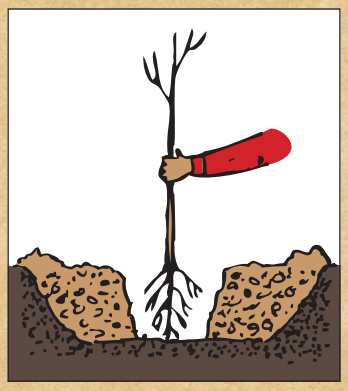
1. Unpack your trees, remove all packing materials, carefully untangle the roots and soak the roots in water 3 to 6 hours. Do not allow the roots to dry out.



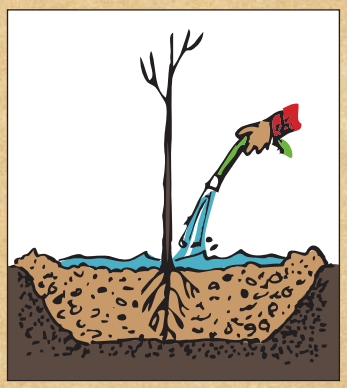
2. Dig a hole, wider than seems necessary, so the roots can grow outward without crowding. Remove any grass within a 3-foot circular area. To aid root growth, turn soil in an area up to 3 feet in diameter.



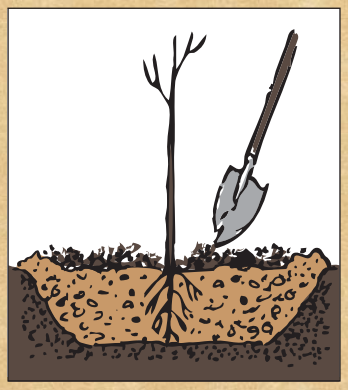
3. Plant the tree at the same depth it stood in the nursery, with plenty of room for the roots. Partially fill the hole, firming the soil around the lower roots. Do not add soil amendments such as peat or bark. Do not use fertilizer, potting soil, or chemicals on your new trees.



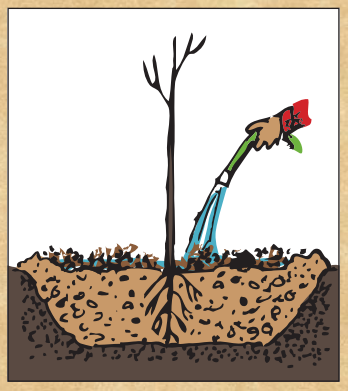
4. Shovel in the remaining soil. It should be firmly but not tightly packed. Construct a water-holding basin around the tree. Give the tree plenty of water.



5. After the water has soaked in, spread protective mulch two inches deep in a 3-foot diameter area around the base of the tree, but not touching the trunk.



6. 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.



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

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Members

Important Notes for Planting Your 10 Free Trees.

Dormant Trees: Yes, they're alive!

To be sure they arrive in a strong, healthy condition, we ship your bare-root trees only when they are dormant in the spring and fall seasons. The roots have been dipped in a hydrating gel to keep them moist during shipping.

When you receive your trees, deciduous trees will generally be leafless and evergreens may have a few yellow needles from winter cold.

A tiny scratch in the bark will reveal a living layer of green – your assurance that the trees are still very much alive even though they are "asleep."

What To Do When You Receive Your Trees.

INSPECT your trees in the package. Extensive damage should be reported to our Member Services Department at: 888-448-7337 or send an email to our member services team at **member.services@arborday.org**.

It's best to plant your trees right away.

IF YOU NEED TO STORE YOUR TREES FOR 2-5 DAYS, make sure the tree roots have hydrating gel around them in the root bag. If you find that the tree roots are dry, open the package and wrap wet paper towels around the roots and enclose them again in the root bag with the twist-tie. Place the trees and root bag in the original shipping bag. Put the trees in a cool place without sunlight (such as a garage, basement, or they can even be stored in a refrigerator between 35–45 degrees F) until they are ready to plant. Simply follow the "How to Plant Bare-root Trees" instructions on the reverse side.

The Best Time to Plant: IN SPRING, your trees can be planted from when the frost first leaves the ground through late spring. IN FALL, your trees can be planted until the ground is frozen solid.

Planting Location: To give your trees the best start, we recommend planting in a protected area about 2 ½ feet apart with worked-up soil such as a garden. After 1 to 2 years, simply transplant to the permanent location when the trees are dormant.

Carefully Separate Your Trees: There will be more than one tree in your package. Remove the plastic bag around the roots and the twist tie holding your trees together. Separate your trees, carefully untangling the roots. (*Please note that the roots have been covered with a hydrating gel which keeps them moist during shipment.)* Soak the roots in water 3 to 6 hours. Do not allow the roots to dry out.

Fertilizer? DO NOT use fertilizer, potting soil, or chemicals on your baby trees. Such products will kill your young trees.

Watering: Keeping your baby trees watered is important during their first year. Keep the soil and mulch moist but not soggy. In dry weather, you should water generously every 7 to 10 days. The water should soak into the soil and mulch. Avoid watering so much that you see standing water.

Protection: We recommend putting a fence (such as chicken wire) around your trees if your site is a feeding ground for rabbits, deer, or other wildlife.

Transplant your trees when they are dormant.

In fall: after the leaves have dropped or, on evergreen trees, when light-brown clusters form on the top.

In early spring: before leaves or new growth appear.

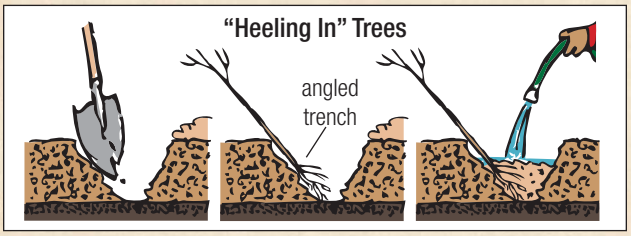
After 1 to 2 years of growing in a protected garden area, when it's time to transplant your trees to their permanent home, begin by digging the new holes. Please refer to "How to Plant Bare-root Trees" instructions.

Within a 2-foot circular area, dig up your tree, keeping soil around the roots. Large or damaged roots may need to be hand pruned. Handle your trees by the root ball, not the trunk or branches. Don't let the root ball dry out.

"Heeling in" Your Trees.

IF YOU CANNOT PLANT YOUR TREES WITHIN A FEW DAYS, we recommend that you "heel in" your trees. Use this procedure if you are planning to store the trees longer than 5 days.

1. Unpack your trees, remove all packing materials, carefully untangle the roots and soak the roots in water 3 to 6 hours. Do not allow the roots to dry out.

2. With a shovel or spade, dig an angled trench in the ground, preferably in the shade, that will accommodate your trees. Lay your trees side by side with the roots of your trees in the trench and the trunk extending up the angled side of the trench.

3. Fill the trench with the dug-out soil, covering the roots but leaving the trunk uncovered. Water generously and keep moist until you are ready to plant.