



A GUIDE TO PLANTING BARE-ROOT  
AND POTTED TREES

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# A BETTER FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

Planting trees in your corner, and in every corner of the world, makes us bold enough to believe in better days ahead.

# PLANTING YOUR TREE FROM THE ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION

We each have a role to play in planting trees at the speed of a changing planet. Trees purchased from our nursery also support tree planting around the globe, so thank you for doing your part. This guide will help get your tree off to a good start in your corner of the world.

→ Keep the mission growing at [arborday.org](https://arborday.org).



## YOUR TREES ARE ALIVE!

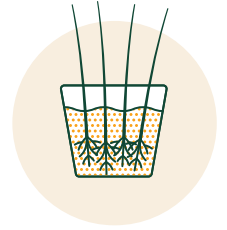
### A NOTE ON DORMANCY

Bare-root and some potted trees ship when they're dormant (asleep), which means they are not actively growing. So, don't be alarmed if your new tree is leafless or has yellow needles. A small scratch in the bark should reveal a living layer of green.

## PREP FOR PLANTING

### BARE-ROOT TREES

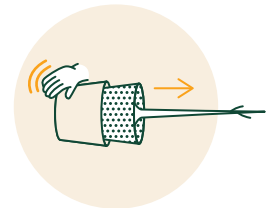
Remove packaging material and carefully untangle the roots. The roots are covered with hydrating gel to prevent drying. Soak roots in water for three to six hours. Store in a bucket or bag, keeping the roots damp, for up to five days.



If you can't plant your bare-root trees within five days, keep them in a bucket of soil or mulch placed in a shaded spot. Try to keep only roots, not the trunk, in the soil or mulch. Keep the roots damp (no standing water) until you're ready to plant.

### POTTED TREES

Lay the container on its side and tap to loosen the roots. Gently remove the tree and try to keep the soil around the roots intact.



If you can't plant potted trees right away, keep them in a cool, shaded place until you're ready. Remember to water the trees regularly to prevent the roots from drying out.

## SCAN FOR MORE PLANTING TIPS



**BARE-ROOT TREES**  
[arborday.org/bare-root](https://arborday.org/bare-root)



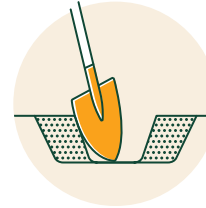
**POTTED TREES**  
[arborday.org/potted](https://arborday.org/potted)

# SET YOUR TREE UP FOR SUCCESS

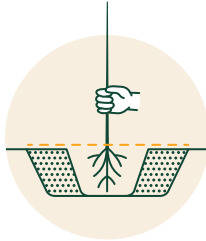
- 1 A few days before you dig, call 811 to avoid any underground lines.



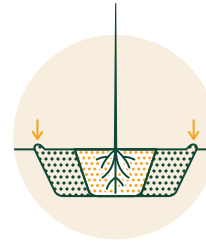
- 2 Dig a hole about three to four times as wide as the container or as far as the roots spread out.



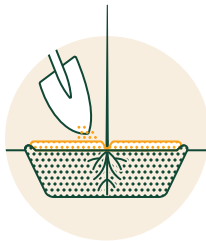
- 3 Center your tree in the hole and adjust the depth so the root collar (where the uppermost roots grow out of the trunk) sits even with the ground.



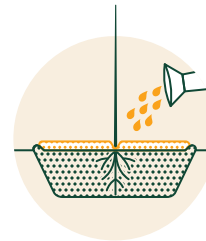
- 4 Fill and firmly pack the hole until the soil is at ground level. Form a circular ridge out of soil about 3 feet from the base of the tree to keep water from running away.



- 5 Remove grass within 3 feet around the tree and add natural mulch about 2 to 4 inches deep. Keep mulch from touching the trunk.



- 6 Water generously every seven to 10 days during the first year. Keep soil moist, but not soggy.



## FERTILIZER

Do **not** use fertilizer, potting soil, or chemicals on your young trees, as this can harm them. Soil typically has all the nutrients they need.

## PROTECTION

Consider a small fence using materials like chicken wire to protect trees from hungry wildlife like deer and rabbits.



## SEASONS AND PLANTING

If you receive your trees in the fall, they may arrive dormant and ready for winter. Brown or missing leaves do not mean your plant is dead. A small scratch in the bark should reveal a living layer of green.

It's safe to plant through the fall until the ground is fully frozen, even if there's snow. Trees shipped and planted in the spring may also be dormant but will begin to green up as the weather warms.





# QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR TREE?

→ Find answers at [arborday.org/faq](https://arborday.org/faq)

Especially if they arrive dormant or are planted in the fall, trees may take a while to start growing. Some trees may arrive with spots on their leaves due to shipping stress, and that's okay too. If they're still not looking right after a few months, please send 2-3 photos to [info@arborday.org](mailto:info@arborday.org) and our team will take a look.



## SCAN TO LEARN MORE

Get involved and find more guidance at [arborday.org](https://arborday.org).



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