

# Planting and care instructions for your tree/shrub.

## CHOOSING A tree or shrub for your SITE:

Research species listed on the GGPR website by using the Morton Arboretum web site. Look for - **Soil preference, light exposure, mature height/width, tolerances, growth rate.**

<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/trees-and-plants/>

## CHOOSING the best SITE for your tree or shrub:

- Match the sites you have with the characteristics of the species you like.
- Don't plant too close to the house/garage, or under overhead utility service or, on top of buried utilities. About 2 weeks before you want to plant, **Call Julie (811)** to have them come out and mark where your underground utilities are located (**Its Free**) so you don't plant on top of them or damage them while digging.

**When to plant:** After Labor Day thru October.

## Digging a hole:

- Dig a hole that is a few inches deeper than the root ball and twice as wide as the root ball.
- Dispose of grass from your hole but save the soil. Return some loose soil to the bottom of your hole to bring the trunk flair about 1" to 2" above grade.
- Remove plastic or burlap from the root ball and loosen the soil of the root ball. If the roots have started circling the root bag, loosen the soil around the roots and spread them out in the bottom of the hole.
- After putting the root ball in the hole compress the soil around the root ball so that the roots are in contact with the dirt but not so compact that water won't soak in.

<https://mortonarb.org/plant-and-protect/tree-plant-care/plant-care-resources/planting-and-transplanting-trees-and-shrubs/>

## Mulch;

- Remove the grass in a 4' to 5' circle around the tree. (out to the drip line, enlarge as the tree grows).

- Spread mulch 2”- 4” deep in the circle around the base. **CAUTION:** Do not pile mulch up touching the trunk of the tree or covering the trunk flair. **This can kill the tree.** (link above shows a great picture of the root flair) This will discourage rodent damage, rotting of the trunk and growth of adventitious roots that might girdle and choke the tree.

**Care of Your Tree or Shrub:** Newly planted trees will require attention for at least three years after planting and water is the most important maintenance practice. The amount of water required, however, is dependent on weather, site soil conditions, type of tree and time of planting. Here are a few tips.

**Watering:** Trees generally require one (1) inch of rainwater each week.

- Before watering, examine the soil a few inches deep. If the soil is dry, it needs water. Place a **slow-trickling hose** near the drip zone of the tree for up to an hour or until the soil is thoroughly soaked. **Irrigation bags** can also be used. If using a **sprinkler**, place a wide can or AL pan in the drip zone of the tree and water until the container is filled up to two (2) inches.
- During the warm months of summer, you may need to fill the irrigation bag twice per week if drought conditions exist. Do not fill the bag more than twice per week, or during times of consistent rainfall, as excess water may kill your new tree.

## Do NOT

- Avoid hitting the trunk of the tree or shrub with **lawnmowers and string-trimmers**. These machines can cause permanent damage because young plants generally have very thin bark.
- Please do not plant, grass around the base of the tree/shrub as it will damage the root system. Wait 2-3 years before planting flowers or perennials around your tree as they will compete with the tree for water.

## Protect the trunk:

If you worry about wildlife damage cover the flair and wrap the trunk up 12“with 1/2” hardware cloth. This will discourage mice, voles, and rabbits. **If you live near the Forest Preserves, (DEER)** bury a 4’ high wire fence (2-4” deep) around the tree/shrub. Secure with 2 good metal stakes.

For more detailed planting advice, contact the City Forester **847-318-5231** or the Morton Arboretum HELP line **630-719-2424**. For GGPR?’s call Chris Parson 847-309-4979, or Cindy Grau 847-532-0212.