

CARING FOR YOUR TREE

1

Your tree is staked to protect it through its first couple of years until it expands its roots and can support itself. The stake has been placed on the windward side—the direction from which the wind usually comes. You should leave the stake in place for 2-3 years.

2

Watering your tree is really important, not only in dry weather. Make sure your tree gets about one-inch of water each week for its first year.

3

Grass growing around fruit trees is bad for young trees, so make sure you weed regularly to keep the area around the trunk clear. Imagine your tree as an open umbrella and make sure to keep the ground clear as far out as its outer branches reach. It deters crawly pests, stops weed competition and, if the tree is in a lawn, it makes mowing without bashing the trunks of your fruit trees much easier.

“Mulching” the ground around fruit trees can protect their roots. In nature, leaves and branches fall to the forest floor, creating an organic mulch that provides numerous benefits to the growing tree. This mulch will protect the soil beneath the tree from drying out in the hot sun or washing away with heavy rain. It retains water, providing consistent moisture to the roots of the tree. It will prevent weeds, provide a habitat for beneficial insects and microorganisms, and even feed the soil as it breaks down. In your garden you can mulch with things like leaves, straw and shredded branches. Garden compost can also be used if it is mixed with a lot of similar woody material. Again, imagine your tree as an open umbrella and keep it mulched as far out as its outer branches reach.

4

Rabbits can use the young fruit trees’ bark as food and nibbles in the bark can provide an entry-point for disease. If you think your tree is suffering damage from rabbits, email robin@abundantborders.org.uk and we can supply a tree guard.

5

In the year after planting your tree will flower and set fruit. In the first year you should remove all but one or two fruits. This is to allow the tree to use its energy to make roots to support the tree and to make sure you get good fruit harvests in future years.