



# Tree planting guide

Bare root plants cannot stand their roots drying out. Once dry, they will at best struggle and at worst die. So, make sure you plant your tree(s) as soon as possible after you get them.

Bare roots plants are usually supplied with the roots in bags. If the plants cannot be planted immediately, open the packaging carefully and put your hand down inside the bag(s). If the roots feel damp you need to do nothing for the time being. Keep them in the bag and check them daily. If the roots feel dry, take the plants out and dunk the roots in a bucket of water for 10-15 seconds and then put them back in the bag.

Look for the root collar on each plant. This is identified by a bulge in the trunk just above the roots. Dig a hole in the ground so that, when the planting is finished the surrounding soil should be no higher than the root collar.

Do not plant too deeply into the ground as the bark can rot quickly when in contact with the soil. When this happens, the flow of sap to the upper parts of the plant is cut off and the tree dies.

Be firm when planting. Roots need to be in contact with the surrounding soil to grow, and plants need support from the surrounding soil to prevent them being rocked by the wind.

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

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





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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.

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, use a tree guard.

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

