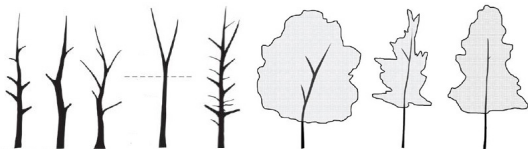


# Tree Planting Cue Card

provided by Roots Plus Growers™

- 1 Start with a quality grade tree as specified in the Florida Grades & Standards for Nursery Stock.



- Select trees with a quality trunk form, branch arrangement and canopy uniformity.

- 2 Check for root system quality.

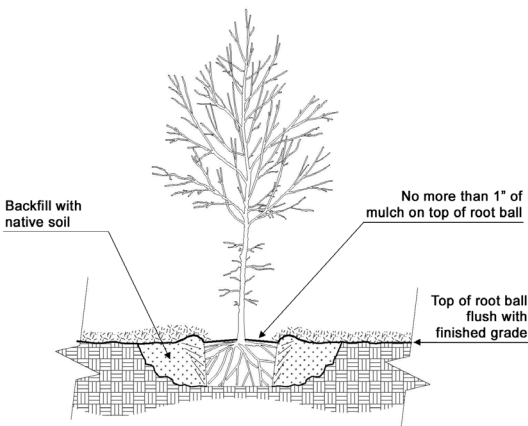
- Field-grown (B&B) trees should be hardened-off or pre-dug at the nursery until new roots are visible through the burlap.
- Trees should be solid in the root ball.
- Top most structural root should emerge from the trunk in the top two inches of the root ball.

- 3 Tree shipping and unloading.

- Trees should be protected during shipping by a tarp or shipped in an enclosed truck.
- Trees should never be lifted by the trunk. Lift using root ball straps or container handles.
- On the job site, store trees upright, in the shade, and irrigate twice daily with 5 gallons per caliper inch applied directly to the root ball until planting.
- Do not store trees on asphalt.

- 4 Planting hole preparation.

- Prepare the planting hole twice as wide as the root ball and slightly less than the depth of the root ball.
- Dig the planting hole shallower in areas with wet soil conditions and backfill up to the edge of the root ball.



## 5 Tree preparation.

- Remove the black weed cloth liner, plastic wrap, or container.
- Remove any string, strapping, or wire wrapped around the trunk.
- Cut any circling roots prior to planting.

## 6 Tree planting.

- Place the tree in the center of the hole with the top most root in the root ball at or slightly higher than the finished landscape grade; in no case should the first root emerging from the trunk be more than 2 inches below the soil level.
- Check to ensure the tree is straight in the hole, and begin filling in with native field soil.
- Water in the backfill as you fill the planting hole, working the soil to ensure that no air pockets remain.

## 7 Finishing planting.

- At the edge of the root ball, make a soil berm 2-3 inches high to form a shallow water holding area. Water immediately after planting with 5 gallons of water per caliper inch.
- Apply a 4 inch layer of mulch to an area 2 feet in diameter per trunk caliper inch, but with no more than 1 inch of mulch on top of root ball.
- Do not pile mulch directly against the tree trunk.

## 8 Irrigation requirements for establishment.

- Use low volume drip irrigation for optimum growth & survival.
- If an automatic system is not used, a strict irrigation schedule is necessary for survival.

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### **Tree Size: 2-4" caliper**

***Irrigation for vigor*** - Daily for 1 month; every other day for 3 months; weekly until established.

***Irrigation for survival*** - Twice weekly for 3-4 months.

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### **Tree Size: >4" caliper**

***Irrigation for vigor*** - Daily for 6 weeks; every other day for 5 months; weekly until established.

***Irrigation for survival*** - Twice weekly for 4-5 months.

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- At each irrigation, apply 3 gallons per inch trunk caliper to the root ball. For example, apply 9 gallons on a 3" caliper tree. Apply in a manner so all water soaks into the root ball.
- Establishment takes 3 to 4 months per inch trunk caliper. In drought conditions irrigate the following summer.

## Important Planting Notes

- The best soil amendment for successful planting is water. Research has shown no benefit to using other soil amendments.
- Place no soil over the root ball at planting. Deep planting kills trees.



*This tree grading cue card provided to you courtesy of  
Roots Plus Growers & The University of Florida IFAS Extension*