



Post-Planting Tree Care and Recommendations

Thank you for your recent purchase of trees from Clark Brothers Nursery, we thank you for supporting our local business and hope you will enjoy the beauty and privacy our trees will provide for years to come. Trees are living organisms that will require care and maintenance to thrive. Most important is the adequate watering of the newly planted trees in the first year.

Drip Irrigation



Gator Bag



Soaker Hose



Watering: Watering: To ensure proper establishment, newly planted trees should be watered slowly and thoroughly so that the water reaches the root ball. We highly recommend using a drip irrigation line for watering, as it provides consistent, measured moisture to each tree. Our installers can set up a drip irrigation line with a timer during installation. ***We highly recommend installing a drip irrigation line on newly installed trees when possible.*** Gator bags are also effective; they can be quickly filled and will gradually release water to the tree. These are ideal for trees spaced farther apart but require regular manual filling. Another option is soaker hoses, which are suitable for trees planted in a line up to 50 feet long. Soaker hoses can be problematic as they tend to release more water in the beginning of a line and very little water at the end of the line. If you prefer using a hose, we suggest turning the water to a slow trickle and letting it run at the base of each tree for 15-30 minutes every 2-3 days. Regular daily checks are important to ensure your trees are adequately watered. Please note that these guidelines are approximate. Your trees may need more or less frequent watering depending on soil drainage, recent rainfall, and your site conditions. Watering should continue from the time of planting until temperatures drop to freezing, typically in November.

Mulch: Mulching of your trees is not a required, but applying a thin layer of mulch or wood chips extending 2-3 feet around the tree can be beneficial. A layer of mulch will help to conserve soil moisture, allow for better water infiltration into the soil, and help to prevent competing weeds from growing close to the trees. When mulching we recommend using an organic option like leaf mulch or natural wood chips. Try to avoid creating mulch volcanos around your newly planted trees, keep the mulch away from the trunk of the tree.

Fertilizing: Research has shown that little benefit can be obtained by a newly planted tree by adding fertilizer in the first year after transplanting. Additionally, adding fertilizer without completing a soil test before could exacerbate a problem you are seeing in your newly planted trees. If you do decide to add fertilizer we recommend using fertilizer tree stakes and recommend following the directions provided by the supplier.

Staking of Trees: Most often when tree stakes are installed they end up causing more damage to the trees than the benefit they provide. Stakes need to be maintained constantly to ensure that the rope around the trees does not girdle the trunk or that the stakes do not end up rubbing against the tree and damaging the bark or branches. We only recommend stakes on trees installed on steep slopes or in windy areas.

Common Issues: In the first year after transplanting, trees may encounter some common, minor problems caused by digging, transportation, handling, and transplant shock. While these issues might seem concerning, they generally do not affect the long-term health of the tree. One frequent minor problem is a few dead or broken branches towards the lower part of the tree, often resulting from the twine used during wrapping for transport. This can be easily addressed by pruning the damaged branches back to the break point. The tree will naturally fill in the space as new branches grow toward the sunlight. Additionally, your tree may temporarily appear slightly off-color, with foliage appearing more yellow than nearby established trees. This is because the root disturbance during planting temporarily limits water and nutrient uptake. During the first year, the tree will focus on developing new roots to replace those lost, and by the following year, it should regain normal growth. This underscores the importance of regular watering during the first year, while fertilizing may have limited immediate effect. Another common issue is leaning trees. When planting, the compact soil of the root ball is surrounded by looser soil as the hole is backfilled. This loose soil encourages root growth but may not hold the tree upright during storms with strong winds and heavy rain. To correct this, gently pry along the edge of the root ball with a shovel and carefully straighten the tree.