

TREE CARE

HOW TO PROPERLY PLANT & MAINTAIN TREES

Planting Trees

Proper methods are crucial for a tree's **establishment** and **survival**. Follow these steps to set your HOA's new trees up for long-term success:

- **Prepare root ball:** Remove circling roots and any above the root flare and scarify sides.
- **Dig a hole:** It should be twice the root ball's width and gradually sloped.
- **Plant at proper depth:** The root flare should be visible above the soil line.
- **Use only existing soil** from the hole and container: Do not add fertilizers or soil additions to a newly planted tree. Press firmly, but do not compact.
- **Avoid** landscape **fabric**, weed **barriers**, or **edging that requires digging**: They inhibit the tree's ability to grow a healthy, functional root system.
- **Mulch:** Cover the width of hole and 3-4 inches in depth with hardwood mulch, pine straw or bark, or other organic mulches, never inorganic material. Do not mulch within 6 inches of the trunk to avoid bacterial and fungal infections.



Maintaining Trees

After your tree is planted, **maintain regularly to ensure establishment**.

- **Water:** Give trees 1 inch of water weekly during the growing season, including rain. Use a slow drip or soak method, and continue until first hard freeze.
- **Manage mulch:** Replace loose mulch on the top of the pile with fresh mulch every few years, and remove any that falls within 6 inches of the trunk.
- **Protect trees:** Use chicken wire, hardware cloth, corrugated stem protectors, or grow tubes to protect from wildlife and wraps in the winter to protect from cold.
- **Prune:** Remove dead and broken branches immediately, and prune after 3 years, only as needed. Clean tools with alcohol before and after each tree and between cutting infected branches. Use 3 cut method for wounds to seal off.
- **Inspect:** Look for signs of stress and pest or disease presence.
- **Fertilize:** Only fertilize to target nutrient deficiencies in established trees following a diagnostic soil test from a reputable lab. Over fertilizing can harm a tree's roots.

Visit mnwcd.org/trees for more information and resources.

Work with your HOA board to create a
tree planting and maintenance plan.