How to Plant a Tree or Shrub

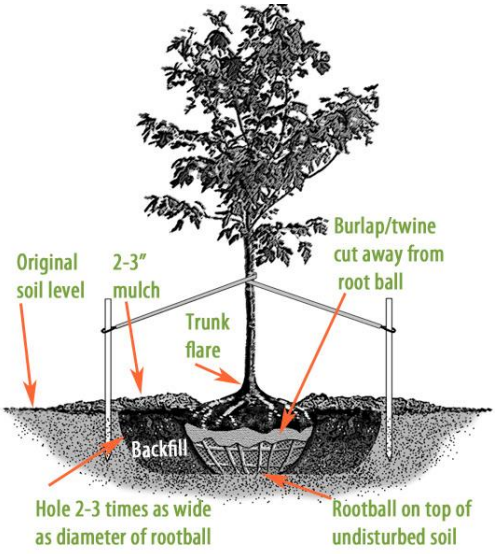
1. Dig a hole two to three times the diameter of the container or root ball, and to the same depth as the root ball. The root ball should sit on undisturbed soil. DO NOT plant too deep! Planting too deep is a main reason that trees and shrubs die.

2. Mix the soil you removed from the hole with no more than 1/3 compost or other organic matter. This encourages the root system to spread out into the native soil rather than just stay within the "good soil." We recommend adding mycorrhizal fungi when planting. The fungi interact with the plant's roots and help them extract and absorb minerals and water from the soil. This helps the plants adapt quicker and reduces transplant shock.

3. Loosen the roots or score the root ball on all sides. This will encourage new root growth and prevent girdling.

4. Place the plant in the hole and backfill with 1/3 of your soil mix, water the backfill thoroughly and allow to settle. Repeat this procedure until the hole is filled, making sure the crown, or trunk flare, of the plant is at or slightly above ground level

5. Set your hose on top of the original root ball and water with a very slow stream of water until the root ball is completed moistened.

6. Your new plant should not need water for several days after this. Trees, shrubs, and perennials benefit more from infrequent, deep watering than frequent, shallow watering. Watering too often can deprive the plant of oxygen, while not enough water will result in desiccation, and ultimately, plant death.

7. Apply 3-4 inches of mulch around the tree out to the edge of the planting hole. This will help conserve moisture and prevent weeds from sprouting. Keep the mulch a couple inches away from the trunk to allow for proper air circulation.