

# BACKYARD CONSERVATION

*It'll grow on you.*

Hoosier Heartland Resource  
Conservation & Development  
Council, Inc.  
6041 Lakeside Boulevard  
Indianapolis, IN 46278  
(317) 290-3250  
(317) 290-3150/fax  
www.hhracd.org  
hhracd@hhracd.org



## TREE PLANTING

### Why Plant Trees?

Trees can provide beauty and structure to your landscape while offering other benefits to you and the environment. Trees can reduce your heating and cooling costs, provide shelter while outdoors, clean the air, offer wildlife habitat, and add value to your property.

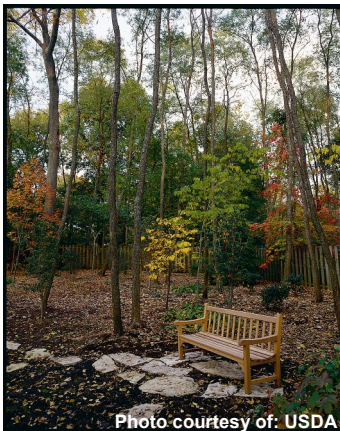


Photo courtesy of: USDA

### What Kind of Tree Should I Plant?

- Native species are more tolerant of site conditions, will live longer, and benefit wildlife more than exotic species.
- The tree must be appropriate for the site (size, longevity, form, leaf color, fruit, planting and maintenance requirements). Make sure to consider buildings, power lines, sidewalks, driveways, and any other easements nearby.
- The tree should provide enjoyment for you as the homeowner, so consider its appearance and function in your landscape.

### How to Plant A Tree *(see illustration on back)*

1. Before beginning any project, check homeowner association covenants, as well as local and county ordinances. Do not work in a drainage, utility, or other easement without the proper permits. Before digging, call the Indiana Underground Plant Protection Service (1-800-382-5544) to identify any buried utilities.
2. Although a tree can be planted nearly any time of year, the ideal time to plant is early fall. Late winter or early spring is the second best choice.
3. Dig a hole two to three times as wide as and slightly shallower than the root ball. Loosen the soil on the sides and bottom of the hole using a gardening rake or shovel.
4. Carefully remove the plant from its container, burlap, or plastic. Loosen the root system and shorten extremely long roots. Locate the root (or trunk) flare. The flare is where the roots begin to branch off the trunk.
5. Plant the tree so that the root flare is at or just above grade level and roots are facing downward and outward. Avoid drying root tips.
6. Fill in the hole, lightly tapping the soil or adding water to settle it.
7. Create a saucer-like water basin around the trunk and water thoroughly.
8. Add 2 inches of mulch around the tree without touching the trunk. Too much moisture around the trunk will encourage disease and pests.

### Early Maintenance

Once planted, trees must have plenty of water to promote deep root growth. For the first two years, trees should be watered after a week of dry weather. Wilted leaves are a key sign of moisture stress. Water trees slowly enough that the water soaks in rather than runs off. Do not fertilize in the first two years. Fertilizing will promote shoot growth instead of root growth. Only fertilize after this period if your soil requires extra nutrients (this can be discovered easily by a soil test). Keep the area beneath the tree mulched and free of other plants that may steal moisture from the new planting.



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Want more information about which trees grow best in Indiana, where and how to plant them in your yard, how to take care of them? Go to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Community and Urban Forestry website and click on *Indiana Community Tree Selection Guide* <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-IndianaCommunityTreeSelectionGuide.pdf> or contact your county's Soil and Water Conservation District office.

**IDNR, DIVISION OF FORESTRY  
COMMUNITY & URBAN FORESTRY  
TREE PLANTING SPECIFICATIONS RECOMMENDED BY  
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ARBORICULTURE**

**Tree Planting Guidelines For Balled - Burlapped**

Limit pruning at time of planting. Prune only crossover limbs, co-dominant leaders, and broken or dead branches.

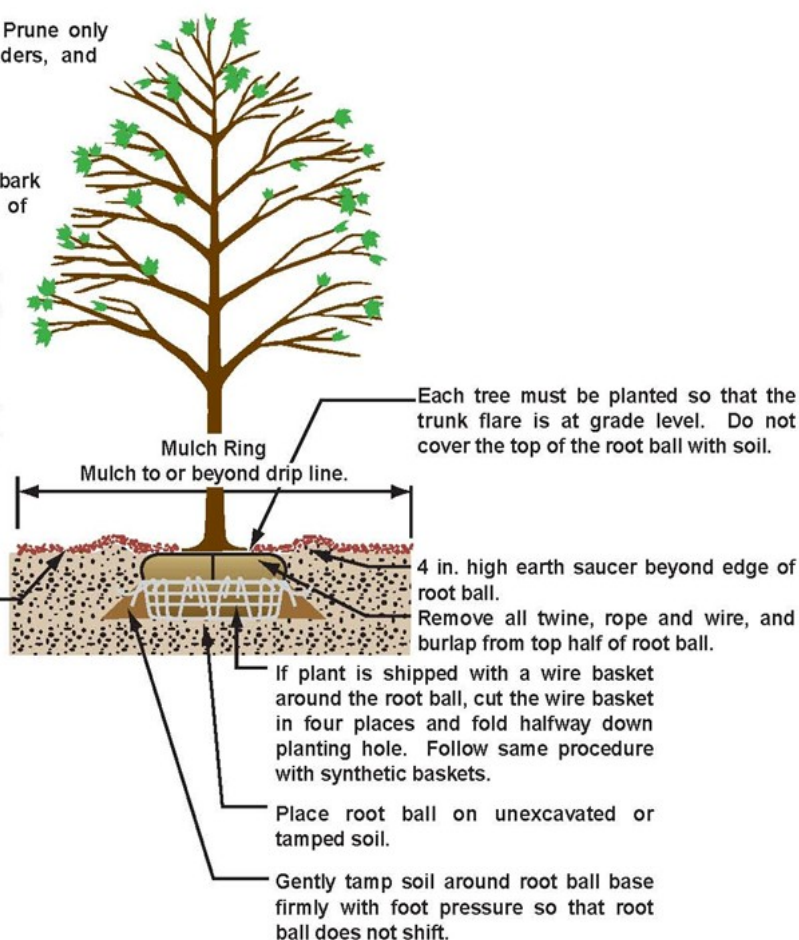
Stake trees only if in a windy site.

Wrap tree trunks only if it is a thin bark species. Remove wraps at end of winter.

If possible - mark the north side of the tree in the nursery, and rotate tree to face north at the site when ever possible.

In wet or slowly draining areas - position the (flare) 1-2 inches above grade.

2 in. mulch. Do not place mulch in contact with tree trunk. Maintain the mulch weed-free for a minimum of three years after planting.



*American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 (Part 6)-2005 Transplanting  
for Tree Care Operations--Tree, Shrub, and other Woody Plant Maintenance--Standard Practices  
(Transplanting)*