



Seedling Planting & Care (2 pages)

These instructions apply to bareroot, plugs, and container stock.

Once you get your seedlings home open the package up to allow them to breathe. Moisten the plants and keep them in a cool shaded area until planted. If your seedlings are shipped, ensure that you pick them up on the same day they arrive at the shipper's facility. Report any miscounts or damaged plants within 48 hours to West Haven Nursery.

Ideally plant your bareroot seedlings within 24 hrs of receiving them. If you need to store your plants for a short period of time, keep them in a cool place with high humidity (> 80%). Keep plugs and container seedlings moist and in partial sun until they can be planted. Do not overwater your plants, keep them moist but not wet! Careful handling before planting will determine success or failure of your project.

Bareroot Sweating Out

Bareroot plants must be planted in early spring prior to leafing-out. If the buds on your plants are not swollen and ready to break open, they may be in a state of latent dormancy. To break dormancy, increase the humidity by covering them with wet burlap, straw, coarse bark mulch, or other breathable material. Cover loosely with plastic to keep the moisture level high and maintain the temperature at 18 – 21 C (65 – 70 F). Your plants should start to bud out in a few days.

Prior to planting check where your underground utilities are located. Plant your seedlings in well tilled soil free of weeds and grass. Try to plant on a cool overcast day to reduce stress. Soak your bareroot plants in a bucket of water for a couple of hours prior to planting. Remove any broken, damaged or excessively long roots, and any damaged branches with a clean pruning shear or knife. Any plants held over to the next day should be kept moist, but not wet, in a cool location. Do not allow exposed roots to dry out at any time during the planting process!

When planting bareroots dig shallow wide holes and place a small mound of soil in the centre to fan roots over in all directions. Make sure the root tips are orientated

downwards. Fill with soil and gently tamp in for good root to soil contact. For plug and container seedlings simply dig holes large enough to accommodate the root structure. Ruffle up the roots on potted stock to free up the small root tips. Cut any circling roots with a sharp pruner or knife to prevent continued circling. Plant your bareroot seedlings so root collar (i.e. trunk & root interface) is at or slightly below the ground level. For plug and container plants set them so the top of the plug/container is at ground level. Pack soil firmly on the roots and water immediately as each one is planted. Stake larger trees for about 2 years until the roots are well established.

Install about an 8 cm (3") layer of bark mulch 30 cm (12") around each plant to conserve moisture and suppress weed growth. Leave the stem/trunk of the plants exposed and free of mulch to allow them to breathe properly. Ensure your plants receive water weekly for the first 2 years to always keep the ground moist. Water more frequently during drought periods (2 – 3 times per week) and hold off if precipitation occurs. Remember that inadequate and over watering are the two most common causes of plant mortality. Check the soil moisture levels adjacent to your plantings to monitor soil conditions. Water if dry and back off if the soil is becoming wet and muddy. Be aware that certain tree types require more soil moisture (e.g. Birch) than others (e.g. Mountain Ash).

Fertilize sparingly with a high phosphorus fertilizer (e.g. 10-52-10) or bone meal when planting. Follow the supplier's instructions for rate of application being careful not to over fertilize. Most of our soils have adequate nutrition and do not require fertilizing. However, you can apply a light application of higher nitrogen fertilizer (e.g. 18-6-12) once or twice a year, typically in the spring once trees begin to leaf out and then again in July. Your trees/shrubs need to start preparing for winter as summer closes out so do not fertilize after early August and start to back off on watering at this point. New growth will then be able to harden off in preparation for winter. As winter approaches keep the ground moist and then water deeply prior to freeze-up in October-November. Start monitoring soil moisture conditions again after the spring meltdown and water as required. Typically, you will need to monitor moisture conditions closely for the first 2 years after planting.

Monitor weed/grass competition and control until the plants are well established. If damage by rodents, deer, and other wildlife is expected then install poultry/hardware wire or electric fencing around your plants.

Happy planting!