



Plant Installation

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The “Do’s” of Plant Installation

How you plant trees or shrubs can have a serious impact on their health. Taking the time to do it right could save you a lot of trouble in the long run!



The tree flare should be visible when placed in the hole. Photo by: Brian Kunkel, University of Delaware

You should:

- Research the planting site’s soil chemistry, soil type, and drainage
- Choose a tree or shrub compatible with your site
- Select an appropriate time of year to plant
- Measure the size of the root ball
- Dig a hole 2-3 times the width of the root ball
- Remove the cage before placing
- Spread mulch evenly over the root area
- Stake when necessary to support growth
- Irrigate based on plant species, weather, season, and soil drainage



The size of the tree root ball should be measured prior to planting. Photo by: Brian Kunkel, University of Delaware

The “Don’ts” of Plant Installation

You shouldn’t:

- Dig the hole deeper than the root ball
- Dig the hole just wide enough to fit the root ball inside
- Add fertilizer or compost to the bottom of the planting hole
- Plant during seasons of severe heat or cold
- Bury trunk flare during planting
- Heap mulch against the trunk
- Water too much, too frequently
- Neglect to water enough during dry spells



Tree planted improperly. Photo by: Brian Kunkel, University of Delaware The tree above has a mulch mountain surrounding the trunk of the tree. This is not the proper way to plant a tree even though it is commonly viewed in Delaware landscapes, parks, and parking lots throughout the state. The mulch should only be 1 - 2 inches and not touch the trunk of the tree.

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