

ARBOR DAY – PLANT A TREE

Arbor Day was started on April 10, 1872. In 1885, the day was changed to **April 22nd** in honor of the founder J. Sterling Morton's birthday. Today Arbor Day is also referred to as **Earth Day**.

Things to consider before planting a tree. **First;** Where to Plant? Look up, are there overhead wires? If so, consider planting a low growing tree or select a new site.

Second; Look around. Plant the right tree for the right spot. Make sure the tree has enough room for the spread of the branches. The perfect spot might not be so perfect when the tree reaches its mature size.

Third; know your hardiness zone and choose a tree that is adapted to that zone. Our zone here is **Zone 5a**.

In planting your new tree, first and most important, **CALL Diggers Hotline!** After considering the right spot and the right tree, the following steps are to be used so the tree has a good chance of surviving.

Step #1: Determine where the root collar is located within the rootball. The root collar is the place where the trunk meets the roots.

Step #2: Dig a hole about 2 to 3 feet wider than the rootball, but no deeper than the rootball. To find the depth, measure from the bottom of the rootball to the root collar.

Step #3: Before planting the tree remove all ribbons and tags. If the tree has a wire basket, at this time cut only the bottom of the wire basket completely off. Don't lift or drag the tree, but gently roll and guide the tree into the hole.

Step #4: Once in the hole, straighten tree. Pack dirt around the bottom of the rootball, just a few inches up the ball to help hold the tree in place as you remove string, twine or cords that are on the wire basket and around the trunk of the tree. Take wire basket completely off the rootball. (If twine, string or cords and wire basket is left on, this material can girdle the tree.) Trim back burlap exposing the top of the ball. Carefully remove the soil on top of the rootball exposing the root collar. Check to see if the root collar is at grade or 1" or 2" above finish grade. (Planting a tree too deep can kill the tree.) Finish putting soil in the hole. **DO NOT** put any soil on top of the rootball. Pack lightly. Make a reservoir around the tree where the loose soil meets the firm soil. (This is to hold water.)

Step#5: Water tree thoroughly to eliminate air pockets. Water as needed throughout the season. About 1" per week, until ground is frozen. This will insure adequate moisture for next Spring.

Step#6: Apply 2" of mulch (woodchips, shredded bark or something similar) over the root zone. Make sure to keep mulch 3" to 4" away from the tree trunk.

Step#7: For pruning your new tree, less is better. Newly planted trees need all the leaves they can get. Prune out only broken, dead or diseased branches.

Note: Most newly planted trees don't need to be staked. It's OK for the tree to move somewhat in the wind. If staking is necessary use wide webbing straps.