

# Tree Planting





# Tree Planting

Trees may be bought in several ways:

## ***Bare Root***

Grown in the field and dug up in the dormant season (late autumn/winter) for replanting where required. Best planted prior to Christmas but can be planted through to March.

Ensure that these trees have been correctly grown and lifted. There should be a high proportion of fine roots. Correct handling and storage is also vital - roots should be kept covered at all times prior to planting to prevent them drying and dying.

## ***Container Grown***

More expensive than bare root, these trees are grown in the field and potted on into their final containers. Trees are then grown on for at least one season to allow full fibrous root development. Container grown trees are generally easier to handle as they are less likely to dry out. Best planted before bud burst but may be planted at any time if suitable aftercare<sup>1</sup> is provided. Be wary of plants that have been left too long in small containers, this is apparent by roots pushing their way out of the bottom of the pot.

## ***Root Balled***

Commonly used for evergreens and larger deciduous trees. Rootballs should be tightly wrapped and not disturbed during planting, should be planted between October and March or April, depending on the climate. Trees can be bought in any size, from whips at around 1 metre to large mature trees that can be anything up to 10 metres. Larger trees are sold by stem diameter.

Generally, the smaller the tree the easier it is to handle, plant and establish. Smaller specimens tend to grow more quickly in the initial stages. However, where instant impact is required or in areas where trees may be vulnerable, larger sized stock may be more suitable. Very large trees should be supplied

<sup>1</sup> See our publication 'Young Tree Maintenance' for details.

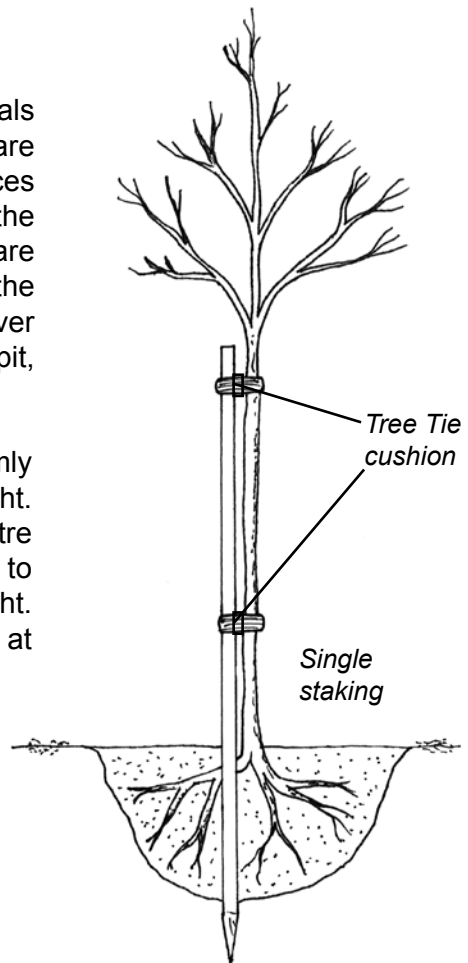
and planted by specialist companies. Trees should not be planted when the ground is frozen or waterlogged. Trees should be transported with their roots covered to prevent desiccation (drying out). Once on site trees should be stored for as short a time as possible before planting. If the conditions are such that they cannot be planted at once they should be temporarily planted by having their roots covered in soil, compost or similar material (heeled in"). The important thing to remember is to keep their roots moist at all times.

## Planting

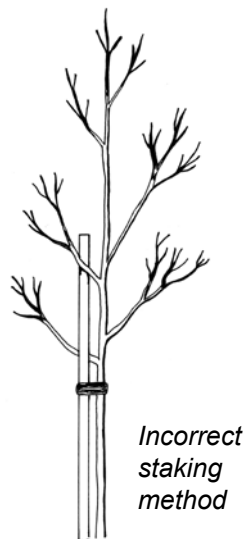
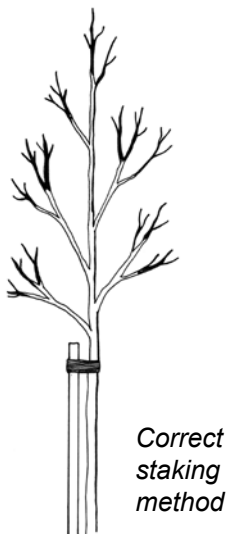
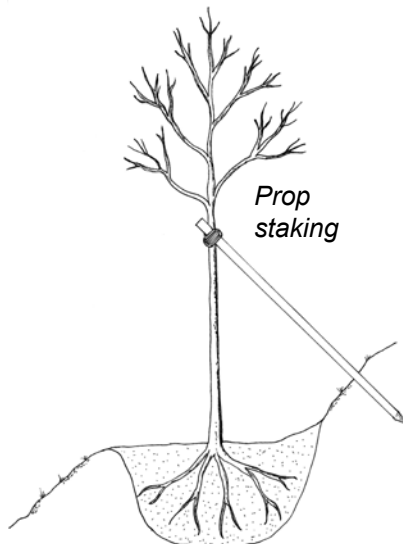
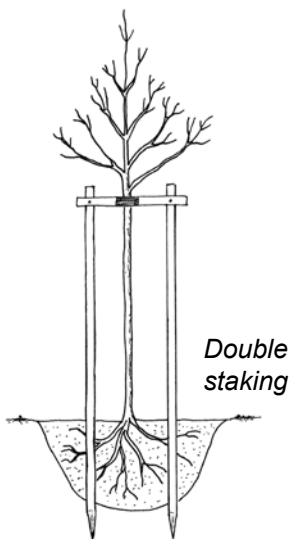
Ensure that you have all the materials that you require. Check that there are no cables or other underground services where you are to dig. Bring your tree to the site and keep the roots covered. Prepare the pit large enough to accommodate the roots without bending them. Fork over the bottom and pierce the sides of the pit, particularly in clayey areas.

If a single stake is to be used drive it firmly into the pit so that it remains upright. It should be close enough to the centre of the pit to allow a tree tie cushion to be inserted and the tree to be upright. Position other staking methods firmly at this point.

Your tree may need supporting for the first 2-3 years after planting. Small bare root trees will need a simple single stake and tie.



Stakes used with container grown and rootballed trees should not penetrate the roots. Double stakes can be inserted either side of a rootball or single stakes inserted at an angle. Short staking is recommended as it allows the stem to flex and thicken whilst holding the roots firm enough to establish.

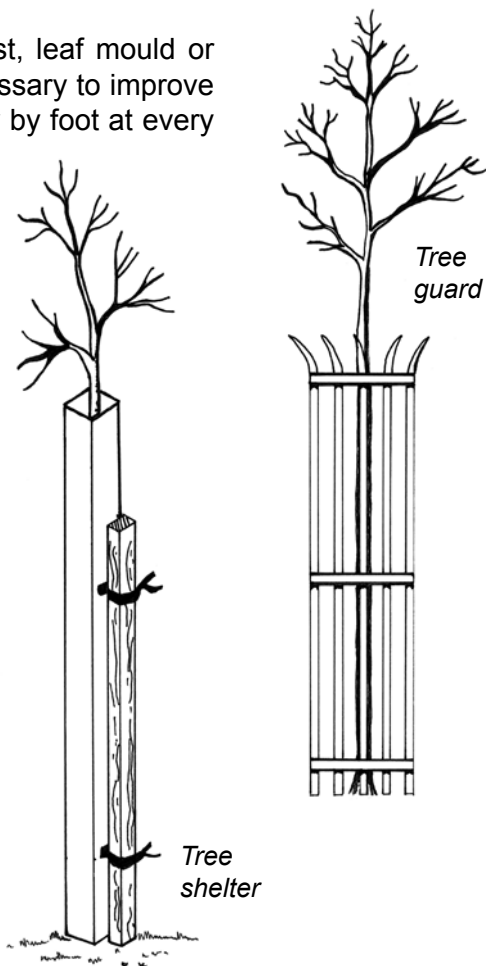


Place the tree in the pit and orientate the tree to the best advantage. Ensure the roots are evenly spread and do not circle the hole. Container grown trees should have any roots circling in the pot spread out or cut. The tree should be placed at the same level as it has been growing in the nursery. This will be evident by the soil “tide mark” on the stem or by seeing the root collar on the tree. It is detrimental to the health of the tree to plant it too deeply. A general purpose organic fertiliser, such as bone meal, may be mixed with the soil to be used to fill the pit (approximately half a plastic drinks cup per tree). Fill the pit 15cm at a time gently shaking the tree as you fill to ensure no air pockets are left around the roots.

The backfill may have extra compost, leaf mould or similar amendments mixed in if necessary to improve soil structure. Firm the tree carefully by foot at every layer.

Attach the tree to the stake with a proprietary tree tie and water slowly but thoroughly to saturate the ground. Apply a thin (50mm) layer of mulch around the base of the tree. Mulch comes in several forms from loose organic matter such as chipped bark, or sheet materials such as woven polypropylene.

The loose material can be advantageous as it decomposes slowly to add nutrients to the soil. The mulch will help prevent weed competition for moisture and nutrients and will keep mowers and strimmers away from the trunk so preventing damage to the bark.







Tree and Landscape Officer  
Environment Section  
North Dorset District Council  
Nordon  
Salisbury Road  
Blandford Forum  
DT11 7LL

**Tel:** 01258 484212

**Fax:** 01258 484230

**Web:** [www.north-dorset.gov.uk](http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk)

*Based on information published by the Arboricultural Association, with permission, 2008. For further information on tree care see [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk).*