



Sustainable Schoolyards

Planting Trees

NEBRASKA STATEWIDE ARBORETUM

Always start with a high quality tree from a trusted, local nursery. The tree should:

- Have a straight trunk with a dominant leader
- Show no signs of damage to the trunk
- Have a trunk equal or less than 2" in diameter
- Be free of insect pests and disease

When to Plant

Spring and fall are the best times to plant a tree in the Midwest. Cooler temperatures and higher rainfall help limit stress on the newly planted tree. Spring may be best for smaller trees as it gives the tree a whole summer to grow and establish before winter but a hot, dry summer can be stressful and the tree will require more care. Fall planting gives the tree just enough time to establish before winter and a head-start in the spring before temperatures rise. Fall planting is beneficial for larger trees that will experience a lot of stress after planting; especially during hot, dry summers.

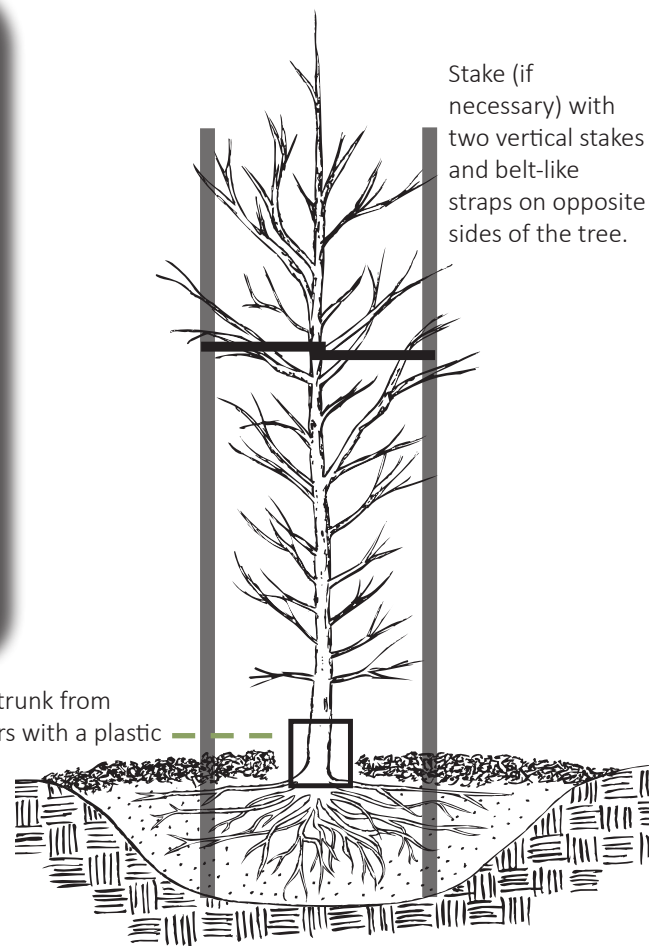


Care After Planting

After planting the tree should be watered heavily, soaking the soil thoroughly to settle around the roots. For the rest of the growing season the tree will need about 1" of water a week including any rain. Take into account irrigation if the tree is planted in lawn that receives water. In many cases it can be just as easy to lose a tree from over watering as it is from drying out, especially if the tree is planted near automatic irrigation.

Planting a Tree:

1. Dig a hole 2-3 times the size of the root mass
2. Remove ALL containers, wire, string and tags including burlap and wire baskets
3. Place the tree in the hole, adding soil underneath as needed, so that the root flare (the point where the trunk flares out and the roots begin) is above the soil level
4. Cover the top roots with 1-2" of soil, taking care not to bury the root flare
5. Mulch around the tree 2-4" deep and wide enough to reach the dripline (outer edge of the branches), ease off the mulch closer to the trunk to avoid smothering the root flare



Consider planting trees as part of a plant community. Use grasses and perennials as the living mulch beneath the tree reflecting the community of plants found in nature.