



# Tree Planting and Care Tips

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

## Planting

- The best seasons to plant a tree are spring and fall.
- Call 811 before digging to have utility lines located and marked. Avoid planting under power lines.
- Dig a saucer-shaped hole as deep as the tree's root ball and three times as wide.
- Break up the sides of the hole so the roots can grow through.
- Set the root ball in the center of the hole, root flare level with the top of the hole or slightly above.
- Cut away any burlap/wrapping. Remove non-biodegradable materials like plastic pots or ties.
- Gently fill the hole with soil and use water to settle it and remove air pockets.
- Add a 3-4" layer of mulch, leaving a 6" bare circle around the trunk to prevent trunk decay.

## Care and maintenance

### Pruning

- Prune away any dead or broken branches with clean, sharp pruning shears.
- Do not prune healthy branch tips or the tallest, center part of the tree.
- Clip any small twigs, called suckers, growing from the base of the tree.

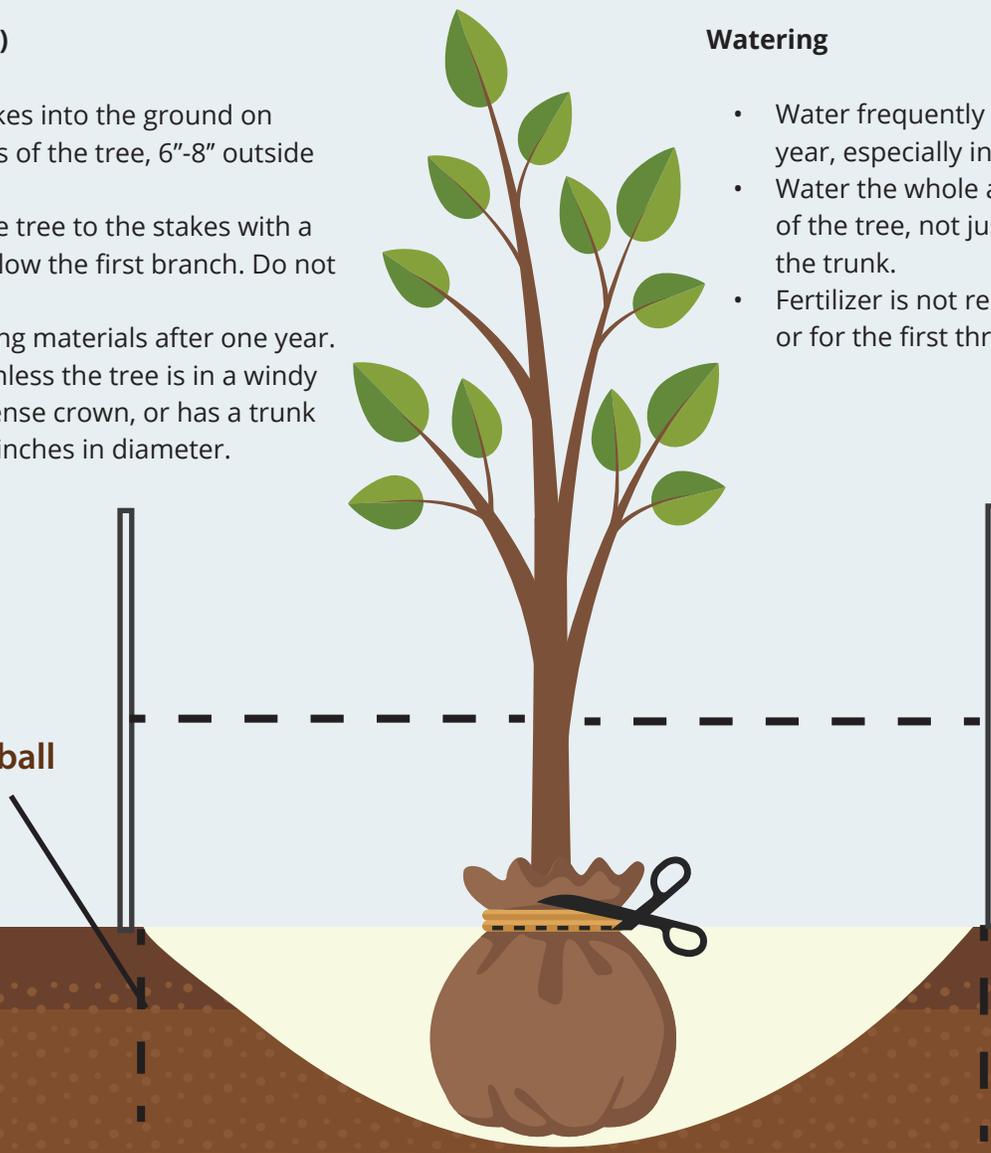
### Staking (optional)

- Drive two stakes into the ground on opposite sides of the tree, 6"-8" outside the root ball.
- Loosely tie the tree to the stakes with a wide strap below the first branch. Do not use wire.
- Remove staking materials after one year.
- Don't stake unless the tree is in a windy area, has a dense crown, or has a trunk larger than 3 inches in diameter.

### Watering

- Water frequently and deeply in the first year, especially in hot, dry weather.
- Water the whole area under the canopy of the tree, not just at the base of the trunk.
- Fertilizer is not recommended at planting or for the first three years.

Hole depth =  
Height of root ball



Hole width = 3 times the size of root ball

