



## Mature Tree Planting & Care (2 pages)

### *Pickup & Transport*

If your deciduous trees are in-leaf try to transport on an overcast showery day or in early morning while temperatures are cooler. Ideally, cover your load with a wind screen tarp. If you do not have a wind tarp keep your travel speed between 60 to 70 km per hour. No special precautions are required if your trees are still dormant.

### *Pre-planting*

Two or 3 weeks prior to planting contact *Alberta One Call* to have your underground utilities located and marked. Once you have your trees, keep the root balls moist and unload them in a cool shaded area until planted. Report any miscounts or damaged plants within 48 hours to West Haven Nursery.

### *Planting*

Try to plant on a cool overcast day, or morning period, to reduce transplant stress. Dig your holes to the dimensions shown below and fill the holes with good quality water to allow the surrounding soil to absorb it. Double check your hole size and then carefully lower the tree into the hole so the root flare (trunk/root interface) is about 1” below the ground level. Trees should be planted in the same orientation as they were grown in the nursery (i.e. see north mark on trunk of sensitive trees) to avoid winter sunscald damage.

### **Hole sizes required for each basket size.**

Basket Size	Hole Dimensions		
	Top	Bottom	Depth
32”	40”	24”	20”
36”	44”	24”	24”
40”	48”	28”	24”

Note you may need to add topsoil or compost if you have very sandy/gravelly soils. Discuss your soil and site conditions with West Haven Nursery if you have concerns. Remove the burlap and string on top of the root basket and discard. All wire can be left intact<sup>1</sup> but bend the baskets wire loops out and down before tamping soil in around the root ball. Fertilize sparingly with a high phosphorus fertilizer (e.g. 10-52-10) or bone meal when planting. Follow the supplier’s instructions for rate of application, being careful not to over fertilize. Create a

shallow berm of soil around the outside of the root ball to form a saucer to hold water. Remove any damaged branches with clean pruning shears. Any trees held over for later planting should be heeled into a soil trench in a shaded location and watered to keep moist. Do not allow the root balls to dry out at any time!

Install about an 8-10 cm (3-4") layer of bark mulch around each tree to conserve moisture and suppress weed growth. Leave the stem of the tree exposed and free of mulch to allow it to breathe properly. To avoid wind-throw, stake your tree(s) to hold in place for a 2-year period until the roots are well established.

### *Maintenance*

Ensure your trees receive water weekly for the first 2 years to always keep the ground moist. Note that some well water is high in Sodium which can harm or kill your trees. Sodium levels should be below about 70 ppm in the water you irrigate with. Water more frequently during drought periods (2 – 3 times per week) and hold off if precipitation occurs. Remember that inadequate and over watering are the two most common causes of plant mortality. Check the soil moisture levels adjacent to your plantings to monitor soil conditions. Water if dry and back off if the soil is becoming wet and muddy. Be aware that certain tree types require more soil moisture (e.g. Birch) than others (e.g. Mountain Ash).

Most of our soils have adequate nutrition and do not require fertilizing. However, you can apply a light application of higher nitrogen fertilizer (e.g. 18-6-12) once or twice a year, typically in the spring once trees begin to leaf out and then again in July. Your trees/shrubs need to start preparing for winter as summer closes out so do not fertilize after early August and start to back off on watering at this point. New growth will then be able to harden off in preparation for winter. As winter approaches keep the ground moist and then water deeply prior to freeze-up in October-November. Start monitoring soil moisture conditions again after the spring melt-down and water as required. Typically, you will need to monitor moisture conditions closely for the first 2 years after planting.

Monitor weed/grass competition and control until the plants are well established. If damage by rodents, deer, and other wildlife is expected then install wire or electric fencing around your plants.

Happy planting!

<sup>1</sup> According to long term studies by University of Guelph and Tree Expert Edward F. Gilman.