

Planting spec for contractors

- 1.The roots of trees to be always covered unless necessary for moving into place or checking/pruning.
- 2.Boards or tarp to be used to pile excavated soil from the tree pit.
- 3.Minimum 1m² turf to be removed to a depth of 50 – 70mm
- 4.1m -1.2m² square hole to be dug, with vertical sides to a depth appropriate to accept the tree's roots without distortion – base of pit should be slightly mounded in the centre.
- 5.Top and sub-soil to be separated and broken into a friable consistency.
- 6.Any large stones or rubble placed to one side for disposal – any significant shortfall resulting to be made up with good quality top-soil/compost.
- 7.sides and base of pit to be forked to scarify any glazing and enable root ingress.
- 8.Position the tree in the hole checking that all roots can be accommodated without distortion, leaving the 'nursery line' on the tree at ground level - adjust by altering depth
- 9.Take tree out of hole again and cover roots (if hot, cover with moist sacking or similar)
- 10.Drive in two stakes as required to avoid root ball using a 'drivall' until firm. If using a single stake, this should be angled at c. 45° and attach at c. one third of the clear stem height. Twin stakes should have a pair of ties that allow some movement but will not drop below one third of clear stem height when slack.
- 11.If stakes are too tall, trim to the correct height with a handsaw so there is no risk of the stem hitting it when it's windy.
- 12.Remove all damaged ends of roots back to a side-root using clean, sharp secateurs.
- 13.Reposition the tree in the hole ensuring roots are evenly spread
- 14.If adding compost or biochar, add with each 100mm layer of soil as it goes back in without altering the layering (if present).
- 15.Backfill around the roots, shaking the tree slightly during backfilling to allow soil to settle down between the roots.
- 16.Each 100mm depth of backfill to be lightly firmed by careful treading, over and between roots, to ensure no voids are left – over compaction must be avoided.
- 17.Check tree is vertical with each firmed layer.
- 18.Attach two flexible tree ties looped from one stake, round the stem and back to the originating stake. and secure with a single galvanised 2" clout nail at 25mm below the top of the stake. NB: head of nail to left approx. 5mm proud to allow future adjustment.
- 19.Lightly fork the completed surface to allow water percolation and irrigate to field capacity.
- 20.Apply a 1m circle of well-seasoned woodchip mulch to a depth of approx. 80 – 100mm, with stem base left clear.

Methodology suitable for 6-18 to 20-25 standard root-balled, containerised or container-grown - see drawing on next slide.

Rootballs, Check that the rootball is intact (made-up rootballs with trees that have not been transplanted during the production process should have been rejected on delivery from the nursery).

Check that the root flare is clearly visible at the top of the actual rootball. Any mounding of soil (which might or might not contain fine root) above the root flare should be removed. (The visibility of the root flare can be impeded by the hessian, wire or ropes used to wrap the rootball.)

Check that the rootball has not dried out during transport and storage and take remedial action if necessary, prior to planting.

If there is wire or rope circling the main stem to secure the rootball cage, ensure that it is removed prior to planting.

Remove the wire cage where practicable. If this cannot be done, peel back the wire cage and hessian once the tree is in the planting pit.

Containerized, Remove the container prior to planting.

Fibrous roots in containers should hold the compost ball together once the container is removed. If the compost ball falls apart the tree should be rejected as there has been inadequate root development.

Ensure that any fibrous root growth or excess compost above the root flare is removed and that the root flare is clearly visible prior to planting.

Shave off any minor roots that are showing evidence of circling. (Trees with major circling roots should have been rejected on delivery.)

Ensure that the container compost is moist at planting.

Trees with major damage, whether above or below ground, should be rejected.

Once a rootballed tree has been positioned in the planting pit, hessian,

twine and the wire cage should be loosened. If wire encircles the stem diameter as part of the wire cage of the rootball, this should be cut and removed.

Any minor branch damage incurred during transport should be rectified. by pruning, ensuring that any branch removal does not include the branch collar attachment.

At no time should trees at the planting site be left with their root systems exposed or vulnerable to drying out.

NOTE Bare root trees are particularly vulnerable to desiccation at this stage.

In general, only the number of trees which can be planted on any one occasion should be loaded for transport from the temporary storage site to the planting site. This avoids the need for excessive handling and reduces the potential for damage. If there is an occasion when all trees need to be delivered to the planting site, the trees should be heeled in or fully protected.

The planting pit should be no deeper than the existing rootball or container depth.

Tree pit sides should not have compacted, glazed or smeared sides from digging. Sides of a planting pit that have been smeared or smoothed during excavation should be scarified.

Tree pits should have a diameter at least 75 mm greater than that of the root system.

During excavation of the tree pit, the soil dug should be placed to one side separating topsoil and subsoil as far as is practical.

The tree's root system should be wetted prior to planting.

The tree should be planted at the correct depth taking into account the position of the root flare and the finished level. Allowance should be made for settling of the soil after planting.

The rootball or root–stem transition should be level with the existing host soil or surface.

Backfill should be added gradually, in layers of 150 mm to 230 mm depth, ensuring the tree is held upright. At each stage the fill should be firmed in to eliminate all air pockets under and around the root system, but with care being taken not to excessively compact the soil.

The final layer of backfilling should not be consolidated, but should be of a sufficient depth to allow for settlement and mulching.

Immediately after planting, the tree pit should be saturated to field capacity.

A support system should be used if necessary.

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