

# Planting Guidelines for Seedlings

## Develop a plan



Consider two things - **what tree/s should you plant** and **where will you plant them**? Analyze your site and consider the characteristics of each tree species. For example, does the species prefer shade or full sun? How big will this plant be when mature? Information about each species is available on our website or you can do more research at a library or on the internet.

## Handling the seedling



For the highest survival rate, handle trees carefully and plant them immediately. Keep roots cool and moist (but not wet) until planting. If planting must be delayed a few days, store seedlings in a cool place until you are ready to plant (refrigerator is good). Even better, heel seedlings into the ground until you are ready to plant them in their permanent location.

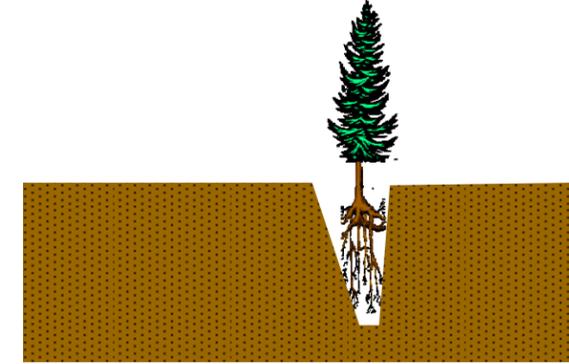
## Prepare to plant



Clear an area at least 3-foot square of weeds, grass, brush, or other trees to reduce competition.

A planting bar or a flat spade are good tools for planting seedlings.

## Plant at the proper depth.



Insert the spade at a 45 degree angle and create a wedge-shape hole. The hole should be just slightly deeper than the roots so that they don't bend when planted. Seedlings should not be planted too deep or too shallow. When you look closely at the trunk of the seedling, you can usually tell the depth at which it stood in the nursery.



Hold the seedling in place and fill the hole with backfill, allowing soil to fall in around the roots. Do not use any amended soil or add any organic matter to the soil. Pack soil firmly around the roots, filling with more soil if necessary. Packing the soil tightly helps prevent air pockets which can dry out the roots. Addition of fertilizer at the time of planting is not generally necessary. If fertilizer is applied, use a slow-release fertilizer, such as Osmocote.

## Protect your tree



Make a mulch ring 2" deep and at least a foot in diameter around the tree, but keep mulch from touching the trunk of the tree. Mulch helps retain soil moisture and prevents competition from weeds and grass.

Mulch, cages, stakes, or flagging may be necessary to protect newly-planted seedlings from lawnmowers, feet, soccer balls, hungry deer, or other hazards. Do not stake trees for more than one year.

## Water!



## Water !

Give trees a thorough, deep soaking and let the soil dry out before the next watering. This encourages deeper root growth.

Monitor the appearance of your trees to help detect signs of insects, diseases, or poor health. The Henrico Extension office can assist with diagnosing tree disease or insect problems and suggest a treatment. Phone (804) 501-5160

Seedlings compliments of  
**Henricopolis  
Soil & Water  
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&  
VA Department of Forestry**

**Phone (804) 501-5175  
Email  
hswcd@co.henrico.va.us  
Web www.co.henrico.va.us/**