

HOW TO MULCH

For optimum tree health, mulch - but don't over-mulch.

Mulching is one of the best things you can do to promote tree health. Proper mulching can:

- Reduce soil moisture loss
- Control weeds
- Protect roots from extreme summer/winter temps
- Improve soil biology, structure, drainage and fertility
- Inhibit certain plant diseases
- Reduce likelihood of damage from string trimmers/lawn mowers

PROPER MULCHING TECHNIQUE

Organic mulch (wood chips, pine needles, etc.) is preferred over inorganic mulch (stone, lava rock, pulverized rubber, etc.).

- Apply a 2-4in. layer of mulch in a donut shape. Keep mulch at least 2in. away from the trunk. **AVOID** creating a "mulch volcano" around the trunk, which can lead to disease and decay - even tree death.



DO THIS



NOT THIS

- Spread mulch out to the edge of the tree's crown or beyond
- If mulch is already present, check depth. Break up any matted layers and refresh with a rake.
- If mulch is piled up against the trunk, pull it back several inches so that the base of the trunk is exposed.

HOW TO WATER

Did you know? Lack of water is the #1 reason trees die within the first year after planting. Watering your new tree regularly is critical!

WHEN TO WATER

Weekly during the growing season - approximately March through November - for at least the first two years.

HOW MUCH?

Water your tree **weekly** (unless there has recently been a cumulative inch or more of rainfall within a 7-day period).

Water slowly so that it can soak deep into the soil. Use enough water so that the soil is moist about 4in. below soil level. Do not overwater your tree, as this could kill it.

As a general rule, use 10 gallons of water per inch of tree caliper. For example, use 20 gallons per watering session for a tree with a 2in. trunk.

FAQs + RESOURCES

Should I stake my tree? Staking is not necessary, but can be helpful to provide physical protection. Use biodegradable twine and remove all staking materials after the first year. Tie the tree loosely to allow for some movement.

When should I prune my tree? Different species should be pruned at different times of year. When done correctly, performing structural pruning every few years will help to establish a strong form and reduce future issues. To learn more about pruning young trees, visit www.treesaregood.org/treeowner/pruningyourtrees

Do I need to fertilize my tree? No - fertilizer is only needed if soil tests show that certain nutrients are lacking. Applying unnecessary fertilizer could harm your tree.

What is the best time of year to plant? The dormancy period (usually November to April in Kentucky) when trees have lost their leaves is typically the best time. This gives newly planted trees time to establish roots in the ground before putting energy into growing new leaves in the spring and summer.

VISIT TREESLOUISVILLE.ORG FOR ADDITIONAL
TREE CARE RESOURCES

Tree Planting and Care Guide

Thank you for planting and caring for your new tree! This tree will provide you and your community with many benefits, including energy savings, improved air and water quality, cooling shade, and natural beauty.



Refer to this guide for instructions on how to plant your tree and care for it in the future.



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For more information, visit
TREESLOUISVILLE.ORG

RIGHT TREE, RIGHT PLACE

A properly placed tree will provide the most benefits: it will help cool your home in summer, block winter winds, and most importantly, will help avoid future conflicts with utility lines and buildings.

Consider these factors when choosing a location:

- **Height and canopy spread:** will the tree conflict with anything when fully grown?
- **Growth rate:** how long will your tree take to reach its mature size? Slow growing species typically live longer than fast growing species.
- **Sun, soil and moisture requirements:** is your tree species suitable for the environmental conditions?

KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE

Trees should be planted a minimum of half of their mature canopy width from a home.

Large / Class A (50+ft at maturity)

- Plant at least 25ft from nearest building
- At least 45ft from nearest power line
- At least 8ft away from roads or sidewalks

Medium / Class B (30-50ft)

- Plant at least 15-20ft from nearest building
- At least 30ft from nearest power line
- At least 5-6ft away from roads or sidewalks

Small / Class C (20-30ft)

- Plant at least 10-15ft away from nearest building
- At least 15ft from nearest power line
- At least 3-4ft away from roads or sidewalks

Full Sun or Partial Shade?

A tree that requires **full sun** should be planted in an area that receives 6 or more hours of direct sunlight per day.

A tree that grows in **partial shade** should be planted in an area that receives at least 4 hours of direct sunlight per day.

HOW TO PLANT YOUR TREE

Now that you've found the perfect spot for your tree, it's time to plant! Follow these steps to properly plant your new potted tree.

ALWAYS CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG!

- 1 Dig a hole** 3-4 times wider than the container and to the same depth as the height of the root ball. The hole should have sloping sides like a saucer to allow for proper growth.
- 2 Remove the tree from the container** carefully, keeping the soil around the roots intact.
- 3 Check the roots** If your tree's roots appear pot-bound or are circling around the root ball, you may need to use a sharp tool to cut through some of the roots. Massage the root ball to loosen any matted roots.



Cut an 'X' across the bottom of the root ball and 4 vertical slices, if root-bound.



3 to 4 times wider than the container



(Courtesy of the Arbor Day Foundation)

- 4 Place the tree** in the middle of the hole. AVOID planting the tree too deep. If the root flare sits below the top of the hole, add more soil underneath before continuing. The root flare should be at, or slightly above, ground level.

- 5 Backfill the hole** with soil, keeping the tree in a straight position. Press the soil firmly around the tree to stabilize it and remove any large air pockets.

- 6 Water your tree** Give your tree a thorough watering. After the water has soaked in, spread a protective mulch ring around the tree. (See back side for instructions)

Tip:

You may consider using a plastic mesh barrier around the tree trunk to prevent damage from mowers, deer and other wildlife.



Permits for Street Trees

In order to plant a street tree (i.e. in the right-of-way in front of your home), you are **required to obtain a permit** from **Louisville Metro's Urban Forestry Division**. Please call 311 or scan the QR code for more information.

