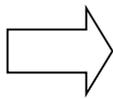


Take it all off!
The Bare-root Method of Installing Trees and Shrubs

Why do so many transplanted trees and shrubs fail?

- 🌳 Improper soil management
- 🌳 Poor quality roots
- 🌳 Inadequate root preparation
- 🌳 Installed too deeply



Poor Root
Establishment

Site preparation

Do not dig a hole (yet) or amend soil

- 🌳 You have to see the roots to dig a proper hole
- 🌳 Roots need native soil to establish - not artificial, amended conditions

A twelve-step program to healthier trees and shrubs

- 1) Work in a shaded, cool area with ready access to water.
- 2) Remove all containers and other foreign materials from the roots.
- 3) Using a hose or a water bath, remove all soil from the roots. Let root balls soak for several hours if they are too dry to work. If root ball is too matted to wash, perform the “cut and spread” method instead.
- 4) Prune defective roots. From this point on, roots MUST be kept submerged or wrapped in wet cloth.
- 5) Dig a shallow hole the same width and depth as your root system.
- 6) Arrange the roots radially and backfill with unamended, native soil.
- 7) Water in, adding more soil as holes develop. This is called “mudding in.” Don’t press or stomp the soil. Let water and gravity do the work.
- 8) Unless you have a known nutrient deficiency, do not add fertilizer.
- 9) Mulch soil with at least 4” of coarse organic mulch up to the trunk.
- 10) Staking is generally not necessary (hand-in-glove as opposed to ball and socket). Sometimes evergreen materials may need staking for a few months. Use the wiggle test to determine when roots have established.
- 11) Water your tree well during the first year of establishment and keep it mulched with wood chips.
- 12) Keep it simple and natural: do not crown prune or add expensive, but pointless, transplant supplements.

Bare-rooting trees and shrubs...

- 🌳 ...eliminates barriers
- 🌳 ...allows for root correction
- 🌳 ...ensures planting at grade
- 🌳 ...enhances root growth
- 🌳 ...improves survival

Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott

WSU Professor and Extension Horticulturist

Email: lindacs@wsu.edu

URL: <http://www.theinformedgardener.com> (white papers on many of these myths)

Blog: <http://www.gardenprofessors.com>

Books: <http://www.sustainablelandscapesandgardens.com>

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/TheGardenProfessors>

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GardenProfessors/>

Publications: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda_Chalker-Scott/publications