

PROPER TREE CARE

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST

This is a guide to help you obtain the benefits of your new trees and increase their chance of long term survival.

THE BENEFITS OF YOUR TREE

Increases the value of your property.

Provides shade which lowers air temperature thus conserving energy and lowering air conditioning bills.

Cleans the air.

Cuts down on noise pollution by acting as a sound barrier.

Provides privacy and beauty.

SELECTING THE BEST LOCATION

Analyze your planting location for the type of soil, moisture/irrigation, and surrounding objects which could interfere with the tree's growth.

Visualize the tree as fully grown when you plant it. A large tree should not be planted under powerlines or close to buildings. Always follow FPL's Right Tree in The Right Place Guidelines.

Avoid weak wooded trees such as Ear-Leaf Acacia, Bischofia, and Silk Oak as they tend to break up in high winds.

Avoid trees with aggressive root systems like Ficus or Black Olive trees near buildings or underground utilities.

Ask an International Society of Arboriculture (I.S.A.) certified arborist (under "Tree Trimmers" in Yellow Pages) to recommend several species which would thrive in your location and their maintenance specifications to follow.

The Tree Preservation Section can also make suggestions in selecting the correct tree for a particular location.

CHOOSING YOUR TREE

Generally, look for a tree with a single straight trunk. A ten foot tree should have branching only in the upper 5 feet. Branching should be evenly balanced on all sides of the tree.

The leaves should be fully formed, reasonably free of insect damage, and an appropriate shade of green color for the species.

The trunk and bark should not be swollen, sunken, broken, and/or discolored from a fungus or a cut.

The tree should have no physical damage to the trunk or branches.

Containerized trees should not be pot-bound or have roots extending out of the container. Do not purchase trees with roots circling more than 1/3 around the container. Slice spiralling roots vertically on opposite sides, making sure not to disturb the soil any more than necessary. New roots will come from the cut area.

For burlapped trees, inspect to assure that the roots have been kept damp and that the larger roots have been cut cleanly. Ensure that the soil is still packed tight within the root ball. Check for the presence of girdling/circling roots and follow the same procedure for remediation of girdling roots for container grown trees.

Plastic "Grow Bags" must be removed before planting.

The container or burlap ball should be ten inches in diameter for every one inch of trunk diameter.

Turn over the soil within an area equal to several diameters of the root ball and to a depth equal to the bottom of the root ball.

The depth of planting should be close to the original depth. Insure that the trunk flair (where the trunk widens) is just above the surface allowing air to circulate.

It is essential to "water in" or soak the root ball to assure the removal of air pockets in the soil and get moisture into the roots. Always water beyond the rootball to promote root extension.

If staking is necessary to insure stability, drive stakes into the ground around the tree (away from the root ball).

Loosely place rubber ties around the trunk to allow for growth. Do not drive nails into the tree.

Remove the mechanical support as soon as the tree can stand the wind on its own. This is usually after seven months for broadleaf trees and after twelve months for palms.

Cover the planting area with two to four inches of mulch to keep the roots from drying out and establish a mulch ring for continued maintenance practices. Avoid placing any mulch around the base of the trunk of the newly installed tree and also avoid excessive mulch in the root ball area.

PLANTING YOUR TREE

Turn over the soil within an area equal to several diameters of the root ball and to a depth equal to the bottom of the root ball.

The depth of planting should be close to the original depth. Insure that the trunk flair (where the trunk widens) is just above the surface allowing air to circulate.

It is essential to "water in" or soak the root ball to assure the removal of air pockets in the soil and get moisture into the roots. Water beyond the rootball to promote root extension.

If staking is necessary to insure stability, drive stakes into the ground around the tree (away from the root ball).

Loosely place rubber ties around the trunk to allow for growth. Do not drive nails into the tree.

Remove the mechanical support as soon as the tree can stand the wind on its own.

Cover the planting area with two to three inches of mulch to keep the roots from drying out and establish a mulch ring for continued maintenance practices starting six inches from the trunk flair of the tree.

ESTABLISHING YOUR NEW TREE

Initial watering of newly planted trees is the best way of assuring their survival.

Make sure the roots are appropriately watered at least twice a week for the first two months.

Water less frequently for the third month.

After three months the tree should be able survive without additional irrigation.

If you see the leaves drying, continue to water your tree during dry periods.

Newly installed trees are exempt from the South Florida Water Management District's policies concerning watering for the first thirty days after installation.

FERTILIZING YOUR TREE

Fertilize trees the same way you do other areas of your yard, at least three times per year. Do not use 'weed and feed' products, as they may damage established trees. Use "palm mix" fertilizers because they contain the micro-nutrients recommended for most trees.

Maintain a ring of mulch, at least 3 feet in diameter and 3 inches deep around the base. This will keep 'weed eater trimmers' from damaging fragile bark and allowing the entrance of insects and infection. Mulching retains moisture, minimizes weeds, and provides nutrients to the root zone.

TRIMMING YOUR TREE

If you trim your own trees, learn how to do it correctly. Improper trimming can be dangerous to you and cause damage to your trees and property.

If you hire someone, check to ensure they have a Broward County Tree Trimmer License, insurance, whether their company name is on their vehicle, and references of previous work.

Good arborists will be familiar with proper standards and are able to assist you in all phases of tree maintenance.

I.S.A. International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certification is a good indicator of professionalism.

Cuts should be done as follows:

Never TOP or HATRACK a tree (cutting off its top).

Never OVERLIFT (removing the lower canopy of a tree).

Never OVERPRUNE trees (removing over 1/3 of the canopy). Poor pruning causes unhealthy trees and safety problems.

FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE :

Contact your tree professionals in the Broward County Tree Preservation Section at (954) 519-1483.

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