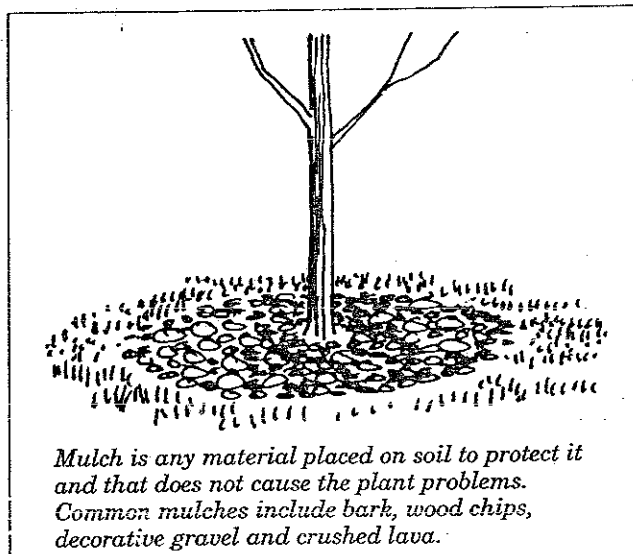
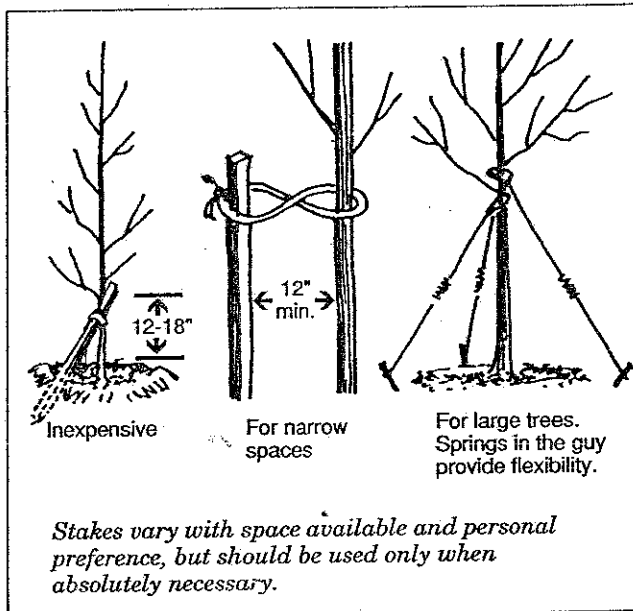
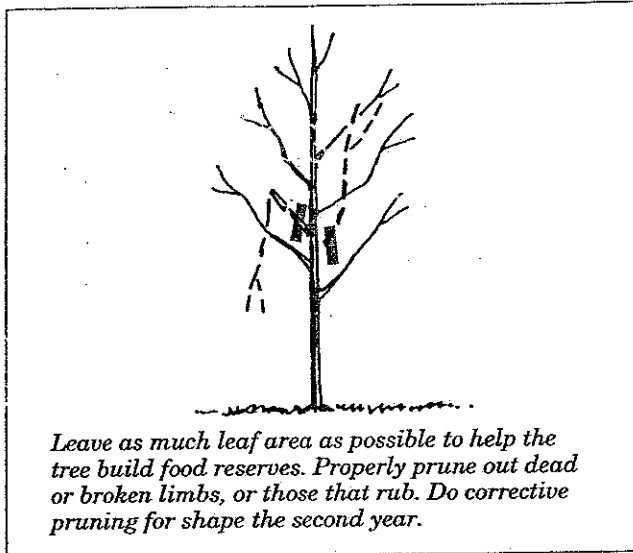


Following Up After Planting



Watering

Watering is the key to tree survival. It should be used when filling the planting hole to eliminate large air cavities, firm the soil around fine roots, and make nourishment available to the new tree. During planting, bare root trees can be dipped in water-absorbing polymers. This amazing chemical comes under a variety of brand names and is available from nurseries. Its function is to attract water when abundant and hold it longer than soil when conditions get dry. It can also be used with balled and burlapped trees, being mixed with the backfill. The effects last for about two years. With or without the aid of polymers, water deeply around your tree once a week during warm dry spells.

Pruning

Unless directions specify otherwise, it is better not to prune after planting if the tree will be watered regularly. Leaves manufacture the food needed for root growth, so the young tree needs as much of its crown as possible. Exceptions to this rule include trees that will be exposed to strong winds or drought conditions, in which cases early pruning will reduce the demand for water from the roots. Always prune dead or broken branches. (See Bulletin No. 1)

Fertilizing

Avoid fertilizing shade trees until late spring of the second year following planting. Fertilizers can "burn" roots or stimulate crown growth faster than the roots can supply water.

Staking

Stakes and guy wires should be used only if support is necessary. Stakes sometimes create tripping hazards and can weaken a young tree. However, when using, avoid common problems by following these guidelines:

- If the main stem droops, find the best place for support ties by moving your hand up the trunk to locate the point above which the top can stand up on its own. Place the support ties about 6" above that point.
- Ties can be made many ways, but a loosely-fitted figure 8 tie made of polyethylene, cloth or webbed strap is easy to install, provides good support and cushions the tree from rubbing against the stake. Using two ties will also minimize the chance of bark damage from rubbing.
- Regardless of the tie used, allow slack for the top to sway.
- Avoid driving stakes through the root ball, or using stakes with flanges that will break roots when removed.
- Remove support ties after one or two years.

Mulch

Mulch is a young tree's best friend. It holds down competing weeds or grass, retains soil moisture, prevents soil cracking that can damage new roots, protects the trunk from lawnmower damage, and helps prevent soil compaction. Organic mulches such as wood chips or pine needles also contribute to better soil structure and aeration as they decompose. Avoid limestone rock and allow no mulch to touch the tree's trunk or be piled higher than 3 inches.