



ACLP Tree Planting/Staking Steps

1. Site evaluation
 - Is this the right tree for this location? Consider mature height, width and root zone in relation to buildings, awnings, walls, sidewalks, curbing, asphalt, signage, etc.
2. Blue Stake
 - Always call 48-72 hours ahead of digging.
 - Call 811, 1-800-STAKE-IT (1-800-782-5348) or 602 263-1100 in Maricopa County
3. Planting hole preparation
 - Dig the depth of the hole 10% more shallow than root ball height
 - Dig the hole 3 times the root ball width
 - The sides of the planting hole should be rough, not smooth
4. Pre-fill the planting hole with water to test percolation
 - Water should drain 1" per hour to verify good drainage
 - A pre-wet hole will prevent adjacent dry soil from wicking moisture from root ball
5. Prepare tree
 - Find the root flare and expose it
 - Slide the tree carefully out of the container. Trim any girdled roots with a sharp knife or pruners
 - Always remove the nursery stake
6. Tree placement in planting hole
 - Gently slide the root ball into the hole with the root flare 10% above grade
 - For boxed trees, remove bottom of box, place in hole and remove box sides
 - It is better for the tree to be too high than too deep
 - Remember that mulch or decomposed granite will cover the roots.
 - Face the best side of the tree towards the primary viewing direction.
7. Backfill
 - Use the soil that was removed from the hole as your backfill
 - Using mulch or amendments as a backfill is not recommended
 - Gently add backfill without clumps /Do not compact the backfill
 - Use the shovel blade to slice through backfill in hole to release air
 - Use a slow stream of water to fill hole and settle any air pockets
 - More backfill can be added after water settling

8. Mulch
 - Cover the backfill with mulch or granite
 - Do not cover the root flare
9. Tree well
 - If one is needed (only if high volume irrigation)
 - Make tree well same diameter as root ball so irrigation is directed into roots first before wetting adjacent backfill. Well can be expanded as roots grow outward
 - Do not change the grade or cover the root ball planting height while forming well
10. Stake the tree if needed
 - Only stake the tree if needed
 - If it stands on its own without bending, no stake needed
 - Two-stake system recommended, one stake can be used if it properly supports the tree upright
 - Install stakes, outside of the root ball into undisturbed soil
 - Determine where to install ties on tree trunk – when supporting the tree with your hand, run it up the trunk until tree no longer bends, 6” above this point is where you will put the ties
 - Use material designed for staking, loop the tie material so there is some movement of the trunk and room for the trunk to increase caliper without being restricted by the ties
 - Secure the ties to the stakes with a staple or nail so they cannot slide up and down
 - Cut or remove excess tie material, it should be neat