Transplanting Your Trees to Their Final Location

After your trees have grown for a year or two in their protected spot, transplant them to their permanent location. Transplanting should take place when the trees are dormant... in the fall after their leaves have dropped or in the early spring before leaves or new growth appears.

1. Dig a hole, wider than seems necessary, so the roots can spread without crawling. Remove any grass within a 3-foot circular area. To aid in root growth, turn the soil a foot deep in an area up to five feet in diameter.

2. Within a 2 foot circular area, dig up your tree, keeping soil around the roots. Large or damaged roots may need to be hand-pruned.

3. Handle your trees by the root ball, not the trunk or branches. Don’t let the root ball dry out.

4. Do not plant the tree too deep. Plant on firm soil at the same depth it stood in its first location.

5. Partially fill the hole, gently forming the soil around the lower roots.

6. Shovel in the remaining soil, packing it firmly but not tightly. Construct a water-holding basin around the tree.

7. Give the tree plenty of water. Do not fertilize until late spring of the second year after transplanting.

8. Place a 2-inch layer of protective mulch, such as wood chips, around the base (but not touching the trunk) after the water has soaked in. Water generously every week or 10 days during the first growing season.

SPRING PLANTING. Your trees can be planted from when the frost first leaves the ground through late spring.

FALL PLANTING. Your trees can be planted until the ground is frozen solid.

Tree Planting Record
Arrived: ___________ Planted: ___________
Transplanted: ___________

The National Arbor Day Foundation
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