

# Tree Planting Info Sheet



## GETTING STARTED!

This information sheet has been put together to give you step by step instructions on how to plant your tree to give it the best chance to flourish in your yard for years to come.

**Happy planting!**

## WHEN TO PLANT?

The best time for planting in Adelaide is during our cooler autumn/winter months and after our first rains, usually May through to August. This will allow your tree to establish with the help of natural winter rain.

## WHERE TO PLANT YOUR TREE?

The location of your tree is the most important part of the planting process. You will need to consider the mature size of the above ground parts of the tree and the space needed for root development. In the interests of tree health, it needs to have room to grow. Placing a tree against a fence line will cause issues with overhang increasing the need for pruning. Try to imagine the size of the mature tree. Major roots will be found under the dripline or edge of the branches so consider this area as well.

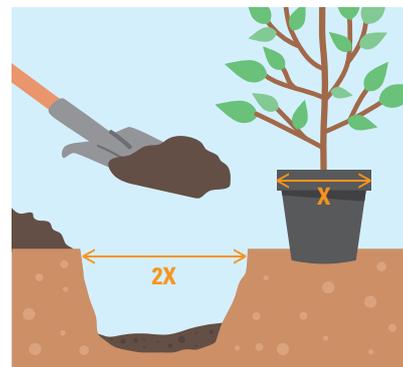
## STEP 1: SOAK THE TREE ROOTS



Soak the tree in the pot before you plant to ensure the roots are soaked through. This will make it easier to remove the tree from the container and also make sure the roots are moist before going into the ground.

**Top tip:** Add a small amount of seaweed extract to the water to stimulate root growth – you can find this at your local gardening store.

## STEP 2: DIG THE RIGHT SIZED HOLE



The ideal hole for your tree is slightly deeper and twice as wide as the plant container. Keep the soil you dig out in a pile next to your hole as you will need this to fill it back in again.

Where water is slow to drain away (clay soils) some gypsum can be added to the back fill mix to assist with root development. If you have sandy soil addition of organic matter (compost) will help with the retention of moisture.

Avoid smooth edges around your hole, you want the hole to look a bit rough. If your soil is really hard and compact, you can fill the hole with water and allow it to soak into the ground before breaking it up with a garden fork.

**Continue to Step 3** →

For ideas on tree species to plant and other information visit [unley.sa.gov.au/trees](http://unley.sa.gov.au/trees)



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### STEP 3: REMOVE PLANT FROM CONTAINER



Lay the tree on its side and carefully remove the tree from the container keeping the soil around the roots intact. It helps to tap the outside of the container to loosen the edge. Carefully slide the tree from the container. Don't yank the tree out of the container as this can separate the roots from the tree. If the roots are coiled tightly, tease them out gently. Otherwise, try not to disturb the roots more than is necessary.

### STEP 4: PLACE THE TREE IN THE GROUND



Set the tree in the middle of the hole. Ensure that the top of the root ball is level with the ground (you may need to put a bit of soil under the root ball). Back-fill it with the soil you kept on the side from when you dug the hole. Make sure all roots are covered with soil and the soil is firm around the tree, but not too compact. It's best to leave a small dip (depression) around the plant – this will act as a water bowl to capture water and help keep the plant stay moist.

### STEP 5: WATER IMMEDIATELY



Give your new tree a good soaking – not just a light sprinkle. It takes a lot of water to reach the roots under the soil so we suggest using about half a bucket or half a watering can's worth.

### STEP 6: ADD MULCH



After the water has soaked in, spread mulch 5-10 cm around the base of the tree, but not touching the trunk (having mulch touch the trunk can cause disease and stem rot). Adding mulch will reduce water evaporation and weeds, and, over time, improve your soil. The soil and mulch around your trees should be kept moist but not soggy.

### STEP 7: STAKING?



If you have a large tree in an exposed location staking will help provide protection from wind forces until the tree can support itself. The tree should still be able to move in the staking system and the stakes should be removed after two years. Trees will only adapt and become established by experiencing local conditions. If you only have a small to medium sized tree staking is not necessary and will do more damage than good.

### NEXT STEPS:

1. During the cooler autumn and winter months make sure you water your tree at least once a month after you have first planted your tree.
2. During summer, trees will need a deep regular water (weekly) for the first three years. After that, they will survive with seasonal rainfall and appreciate a deep water before heatwaves and during the hotter drier months.
3. Pruning – you can prune (trim) your tree after the first year gently to encourage new growth. This should be done in spring/early summer.