

POTTED FRUIT TREES



Planting: Be sure to remove the tree from the pot. Try to keep the dirt around the tree; if the tree is root-bound (meaning the roots are tight in the pot) gently pull the roots apart so they do not girdle or choke the tree by winding around themselves. Plant the tree at the graft or slightly above the graft. **DO NOT plant the tree too deep!** Planting the tree too deep will kill the tree. If your soil is poor mix in some peat or compost and black dirt along with your soil. This will encourage faster root growth and faster recovery from the shock of planting. After filling the hole halfway, add enough water to make the soil somewhat soupy. This will remove any air pockets that have formed around the root system. Use a slow release or water-soluble fertilizer after planting, so the roots will not be burned.

Maintaining: After planting in the ground, remember they will need regular water for up to two or three years to get established. Water needs in the first year are the most crucial, when the plant is developing its root system. Some first year pruning may be required. Sometimes the roots cannot take in water fast enough to keep up with the top growth, resulting in some wilting foliage. Any tree that appears unbalanced with the top far outpacing the roots in development should be lightly pruned after planting.

Edging/Barrier: Protect your newly planted trees from your lawn mower and weed trimmer by placing a mulch barrier about 12" from the trunk of the newly planted tree. Mulch also helps to maintain moisture and control weeds. Injuries won't appear for years if they are injured when young. Lawn mower damage kills more trees than disease and insects combined.

Pruning: When pruning be sure to use a sharp pruner and never rip branches from the tree. Use pruning sealer on any large cuts. A good rule of thumb when pruning is to make cuts which will allow the sunlight to shine into the middle of the tree, so prune above an outward facing bud. Try to never prune more than 1/3 of the new growth. Pruning is typically done in late fall or early spring when the tree is dormant.

Staking & Wrapping: Staking stabilizes the tree and will keep the trunk from moving too much or from new roots being broken off when the tree is moved by strong winds. Young trees are susceptible to cracks in the bark which are caused by the combination of cold winter temperatures and bright winter sun. The wrap can also protect from rabbits and mice chewing on the soft bark. Remember to wrap with a plastic spiral wrap a high as you think the snow will get or to at least the bottom branches.

BE SURE TO KNOW IF YOU NEED A POLLINATOR FOR YOUR TREE AND BE SURE TO PLANT YOUR POLINATORS WITH IN 20 FEET OF EACH OTHER.

Don't be surprised if your fruit tree does not bare fruit for the first few years. The first year it will send most of its energy to its roots (that's good), second year most of its energy to its leaves, third year most of its energy to its flowers, and the fourth year most of its energy to its fruit. You want to have a strong and healthy tree to support your fruit so be patient.

You may also want to take a broom with a soft cloth at the end of it and gently go over the flowers on one tree and then go over the flowers on the other to aid in the cross-pollination (or just leave it to the birds and the bees).