



Planting A 5-Gallon Container-Grown Tree

- Container trees are the most common type seen at nurseries and in city programs.
 - a) They are often sold by the "gallon", which specified the size of the container.
- Container trees can be kept out of the ground for a while if the soil is kept moist.
 - a) Be sure to keep the unplanted trees in a shady area so they do not overheat or dry out.

Digging the Hole

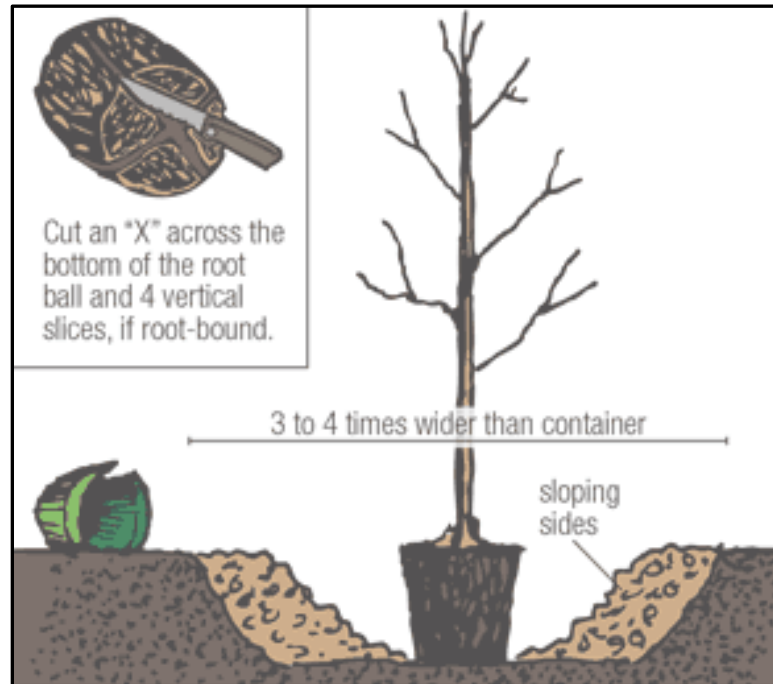
- Container-grown trees should be planted in a hole **three to four times** the diameter of the container. If the container is 10-inches across, the hole should have at least a 30-inch diameter.
 - a) Spread a tarp on the ground to collect the excavated soil.
 - b) Break up the 6 - 8-inches of soil at the bottom of the hole but do not remove this soil.
 - c) Make the depth of the hole shallow enough to allow the top of the root ball or **root flare** to sit 1 - 2-inches above ground of the forest floor.
 - d) A yard stick will be helpful for this step. Compare the hole depth with the tree in the container.

Planting the Tree

- Because of the managed growing conditions at the tree farm, container trees need particular care when planting.
- **Always move a container tree by the container, not the trunk.**
- Container-grown trees are especially susceptible to root binding.
 - a) Prepare the soil removed from the hole by breaking up and large clumps. This is particularly important if the soil at the tree planting location is clay. Clay soil does not allow water to pass through it quickly. For that reason, it will take longer for water to reach the most critical parts of the tree roots. Clay soil surrounding a newly planted tree can also form a water resistant barrier that will prevent water from soaking into the ground away from the tree. More newly planted trees die from too much water than not enough when the tree is planted in clay soil. Too much water will suffocate the roots. If the soil removed from the hole is clay, it will be necessary to mix in sand or small pebbles of rocks into the 6 - 8 inches of loose soil that will be below the bottom of the root ball. It would also be wise to add sand or garden mix and the water absorbing

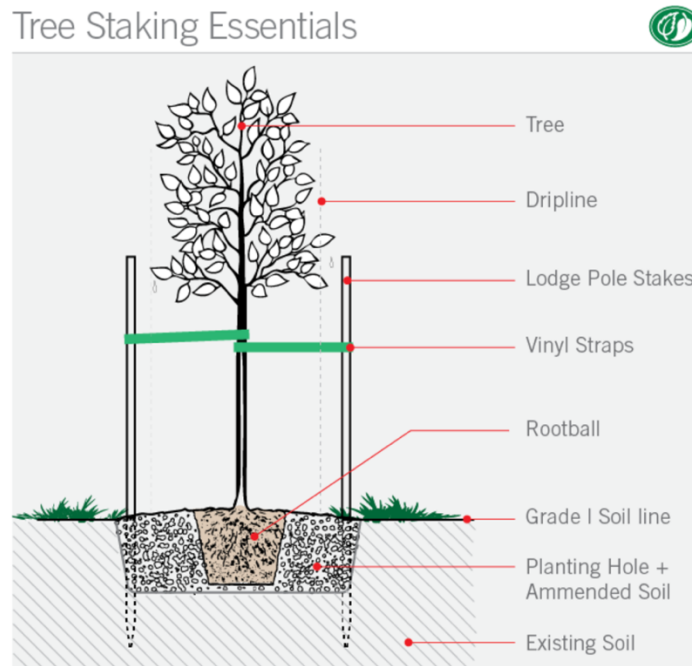
polymer and slow release fertilizer provided by Trees for Kingwood to the soil used to backfill around the newly planted tree.

- b) When you are ready to plant, remove the root ball from the container and examine it carefully.
- c) Unwrap roots that are encircling the root ball; if there are larger roots that cannot be moved, they can be cut. When cutting the roots, cut an X across the bottom of the root ball and four vertical slices along the sides of the root ball. This can be done with a very sharp knife or a pair of clippers.



- d) Using the back of a shovel or your shoe, press down on the sides of the root ball, as you roll it over the ground.
- e) The goal is to loosen the compaction that occurs over time in the container.
- f) If you have a small garden fork, brush out the root strands to straighten them out.
- g) Be careful not to tear or break the major root fibers.
- h) Set the tree in the middle of the hole. Avoid planting the tree too deep. Extend any bare roots away from the root ball as you back fill the hole around the root ball. Take care to keep the tree in a straight vertical orientation. Firmly pack the prepared soil around the root ball but do not compress the soil. Keep backfilling until the soil is just below the root collar.
- i) Use excess soil from the hole to create a water holding berm around the hole perimeter.
- j) Apply 2-gallons of water with 3-ounces of root stimulator mixed into the water.
- k) After the water soaks in, spread a protective layer of mulch 2 - 3 inches deep in a 3 foot diameter around the base of the tree, but not touching the trunk.
- l) Remove any labels or tags from the tree as these will affect the tree as it grows. You may prune any broken or dead branches from the tree, but do not prune branches otherwise.

- m) A newly planted 5-gallon tree will likely not need additional support. If you do wish to add support for the tree, use material that will not cut into the bark of the tree. Also make sure the diameter of the strap around the trees is large enough to allow the trunk to grow. Bamboo, wood, or metal stakes can be used to provide additional support to the tree for the first few years.



- n) Be careful when using a weed whacker near the tree to avoid damaging the trunk. If weeds begin to grow near the tree, remove them by hand.
- o) Do not add any other fertilizer to the new tree. The soil around the newly planted tree should be kept moist, but do not overwater the tree. A good watering once every 7 days should be sufficient.

The Tree are Free

Tree for Kingwood is happy to provide trees to Kingwood residents through our affiliation with **Trees for Houston**. **Trees for Houston** is a **501 (c)3 non-profit organization**. All contributions made to Trees for Houston are **tax deductible**. If you would like to support this tree give away and future efforts to restore Kingwood as a livable forest, please consider making a donation by check or by use of the QR Code below. Checks should be made payable to **Trees for Houston** with the notation the donation is for **Trees for Kingwood**.

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