



# Planting Steps & 1<sup>st</sup> Year Care

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## 1 Plant Selection

Choose your tree or shrub to fulfill your landscape needs, such as flowering, evergreen, screening, hedge, shade, border, etc. Be sure to consider the ultimate size of each plant. Speak with a **TLC Expert** for guidance in selecting the proper tree for your location.

## 2 Call OKIE

Call **OKIE at 811** to have your utility lines marked before planting. This service is free of charge, but takes 48 hours to be completed. Also, be sure to keep in mind any overhead power lines.

## 3 Dig hole

The planting area should be in well-drained soil with proper sunlight for the tree selected. Dig the hole twice the width of the root ball or container. The depth of the hole should be 3-4" shallower than the root ball. This will allow the root ball to be planted slightly higher than the surrounding soil.

## 4 Prepare Soil

Prepare your soil with a mixture of 50% **Back to Earth™ Composted Cotton Burrs** and 50% existing soil. If you are planting in clay soil, add a 10% ratio of **Soil Menders™ Expanded Shale** to ensure better drainage.

## 5 Set Plant

Remove the shrub or tree from its container, keeping the root ball intact. If your tree comes wrapped in natural burlap, do not remove the burlap or any wire basket around the root ball. Place the root ball in the center of the hole. Check to make sure that the top of the root ball is 3-4 inches higher than the surrounding ground.

## 6 Back fill

Tamp the prepared backfill soil firmly around the root ball to eliminate air pockets. Cut any twine or rope around the tree trunk to prevent girdling of the trunk. Pull down or cut away the burlap to expose the top 1 to 2 inches of the top of the root ball. Do not place backfill soil over the top of the root ball, but mound to cover all sides of the root ball.

## 7 Water in

Immediately after planting, slowly water the tree or shrub from the top of the root ball until the soil is saturated. Later in the day, water a second time using **Fertilome™ Root Stimulator** to stimulate early root growth and stability. This is the only fertilizer your tree will need for its first year and it should be applied every 2 weeks, even in winter, to promote root growth.

## 8 Mulch

Keep the grass and weeds away from your tree for at least two years to prevent competition for water and nutrients. A layer of **Grade A Cypress or Grade A Cedar Mulch** placed to a depth of 2 inches over the area of the hole will discourage grass growth and conserve moisture. If necessary, you may pull the mulch back to inspect the soil moisture of the root ball to determine watering needs.

## 9 Stake

Most new trees or tall shrubs planted in Oklahoma require staking for wind protection for a minimum of two years. **DeWitt™ Stake Straight Kit** is excellent for tree under 2" caliper. Larger trees may require a larger stake such as a T-Post. Keep in mind the support straps need to be placed above a bottom branch and the stakes need to be in solid soil (not newly dug soil). Periodically check the staking to ensure firms hold of the tree, but that the straps are not so tight as to cause an abrasion on the trunk.

## 10 Trouble-Shooting

Periodically inspect your trees and shrubs to detect insect, fungus, or environmental problems. Be on the lookout for: defoliation, chewed or discolored leaves, ants, sawdust coming from holes in the bark. If problems exist, please bring a sample of the damage to *TLC Garden Centers* for identification and recommendations. You may also "Ask the Experts" at [www.tlcgarden.com](http://www.tlcgarden.com).

### First Year Care

Now that your new tree or shrub is planted, take these steps to ensure strong vigorous growth and a healthy, long life.

Adequate watering is the main key to plant survival. After planting, water trees as needed to keep the soil evenly damp but not wet. Do not rely on sprinkler systems alone to properly water new plantings. A **Dramm Tree Soaker Ring** is an inexpensive but effective water applicator. Do not water plants if the soil is wet from rainfall or your previous watering.

Apply **Greenlight™ Root Stimulator** or **Miracle Gro™ Plant Food** every two weeks for the first year. After the tree or shrub has been planted for one year, fertilize twice a year, in early fall and again in early spring, with **TLC Tree, Shrub, and Landscape Food**. A systemic insecticide such as **Bayer Advanced™ Tree and Shrub-Protect & Feed** should also be applied in spring to protect the plant from unwanted pest damage.

***Keep in mind, Oklahoma has experienced periods of severe drought conditions the past few years. The proper watering of your plants is critical to their health and survival.***

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