

### Tips for planting trees

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. As the soil slowly warms up we are moving into the perfect time to be planting trees, either ornamental or fruit trees. You may think that planting a tree is a no brainer, but there are a lot of things that need to be taken into account when planting a tree. Start by selecting the right tree for the right location. Don't plant an ornamental tree that will have fruit over a sidewalk or driveway. Stepping on rotten fruit on a sidewalk isn't fun. Don't plant a tree that will get large 4 feet from the house. It may be hard to visualize, but plan for the mature tree. If you don't plant the tree as soon as you get it home, keep it watered and in a shady location. When you move it, do so by lifting the rootball or pot, not by the trunk. Before planting remove all wires, tags, labels, anything attached to the tree. If you don't, these could become an ever tightening noose that may kill all or part of the tree years on down the road. The root flare, that point where the trunk and roots meet, should be visible. If it isn't, remove soil or rooting media so it becomes visible. Dig a proper hole. Make the hole deep enough so that the tree sits slightly higher than it was in the nursery. The hole should be three times wider than the root ball up to five times wider. This will allow quicker root development and better establishment. Tree roots grow out more so than down. Speaking of down, don't dig the hole too deep. You want the tree sitting on solid ground, not fill soil that you had to put back in. This fill soil will settle, the tree can drop and that can lead to problems. Tomorrow more tree planting tips! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck

Otte.

## More Tree Planting tips

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Picking up where we left off yesterday on tree planting, remove all containers from the root ball. Cut away plastic and peat pots, remove as much of the burlap as you can and if possible remove the wire basket that surrounds the burlap in ball and burlap. That burlap can be slow to decay in our soils and can really inhibit root development. Try to look for circling roots for any tree that was in a pot. If you find circling roots cut them and spread them out. Backfill with the same soil you dug out. Having a big change in soil can really mess up root development and water infiltration. Make sure that the backfill soil is loose, not cloddy and clumpy. You don't want large air voids around the root ball. Don't cut back branches unless you have some that are rubbing on each other and damaged. You need as many buds and leaves as possible for that young root system. Water the tree thoroughly right after planting and then once a week the first season if there isn't enough rainfall. Enough rainfall is an inch a week in much of the season, two inches a week when it is really hot in mid and late summer. When you water, don't stand there holding the hose. That's inefficient. Lay the hose down, turn it on a slow trickle and let it run for an hour or two. Our soils take in water slowly so be patient. Mulch around the tree at least as far out as the root ball and twice that far is better. Use an organic mulch 2 to 4 inches deep. Finally, stake only when necessary. I prefer planting smaller trees so you don't have to stake, but staking should only be for one year to stabilize the rootball. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

## Transplant solutions and starter fertilizers

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. When we transplant bedding plants and vegetable plants it is common to use a transplant solution. This solution is a mild or weak fertilizer solution, usually high in phosphorus that is designed to jump start the small plants. Phosphorus in the soil, especially cool soil, and young plant roots have a love hate relationship. The young plant roots really love the phosphorus because it's necessary to develop a strong root system quickly. But young plant roots don't work well, especially in cool soils, and the cool soils hate to let go of their phosphorus. So young transplants can develop a purplish tinge even in soils with high phosphorus levels if a transplant solution isn't used. However, this is one of the classic cases where if a little is good, more is NOT better. Fertilizers, especially nitrogen fertilizers, are salts. Those tender young roots can be burned if too much fertilizer is applied. The higher concentration of salts will burn the roots, the roots will be slower to redevelop and plant growth will be slow. Fortunately, the phosphorus fertilizer is not a salt and is less of a problem with burning roots. You can buy some expensive liquid starter fertilizer solutions specifically for transplanting, but you don't have to. Just get a granular garden fertilizer like a 5-10-5 or 10-20-10, anything where the middle number is half again to double the first number. Then add about 3 tablespoons of the granules to a gallon of water and let it set for a couple of hours. Not all the granules will dissolve, but that's okay. Use about one cup of this solution per transplant. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.