

Selecting a Location:

Every tree should be planted in accord with an overall landscape plan. Take into consideration the effect you wish to achieve, the size of the tree, the plants around it, and necessary pruning and maintenance. As a general rule, trees should be placed so that they may develop freely without crowding each other, the house, utility lines or other structures.

Before selecting a spot for a tree, determine its mature size. Most trees grow as wide as they grow tall, so estimate width from the ultimate height. Due to their size, shade trees should be placed well away from the house or other buildings. Keep in mind that in years to come, the tree may lose branches in storms so keep large trees at least 20 feet away from buildings and utility lines.

Planting:

Cut any crushed or broken roots off just inside the injury. If any roots encircle more than 1/3 of the root ball, cut them with 3 vertical cuts spaced equally around the rootball. This will not harm the tree if it is properly watered. Prune any broken branches just beyond the collar.

Dig the planting hole a little deeper than the root ball of the tree, layer a mixture of Rockledge Gardens amendment mix and existing soil, water the soil in the bottom of the hole. Once it settles, make sure the depth of the hole is equal to that of the root ball.

Gently place the tree into the hole, checking that the soil at the top of the root ball is level with the soil in your yard. Fill around the root ball with the remaining soil mixture and eliminate air pockets with a gentle stream of water.

Form a 2-4" ridge of soil around the hole to serve as a reservoir when watering.

Planting in low areas:

If your soil stays wet during the rainy season, you will want to build a berm with soil to plant the tree on higher ground.

Watering:

For the first 2-3 weeks, water new trees thoroughly every day during hot weather, every

other day in cooler weather. Water by hand with a low pressure hose to completely soak the soil in the root zone - rather than frequent, light waterings.

For the next 3-4 weeks, water thoroughly by hose 2-3 times per week. Cut back watering if it rains. Some areas of Brevard County tend to stay quite moist during the rainy season—special precautions must be taken in these areas.

Fertilizing:

If you opt for **traditional fertilizing**, apply **Sunniland's 6-6-6** one month after planting. If you do not use Sunniland products, make sure that the 6-6-6 you choose contains minor nutrients.

Spread fertilizer on the surface up to the dripline of the tree. Do not allow fertilizer to come in contact with the tree's trunk. Florida's porous soils leach nutrients quickly, so it is not necessary to dig the fertilizer in. We do not recommend fertilizer spikes.

Organic fertilizers contain natural products that won't burn the tree's roots. Apply **Espoma Tree-Tone** immediately after planting and every 2 months during the growing season - read up on your county's fertilizer restrictions prior to fertilizing.

Traditional fertilizer is used less frequently and contains minor nutrients. Take care to use the exact recommended amount to prevent fertilizer burn.

Organic fertilizer will not burn roots or leaves and are safer for the environment. If signs of minor element deficiencies occur, minor nutritional spray should be applied.

Avoid using "weed and feed" fertilizers around your trees as they may cause long-term harm.

Pruning:

When pruning a young tree, maintain one dominant central trunk by pruning back vigorous shoots that tend to compete with the leader. Remove lower branches, a few at a time, over a period of several years to achieve the desired ground clearance. Any tree pruning that requires the use of a ladder should be done by a certified ISA arborist.

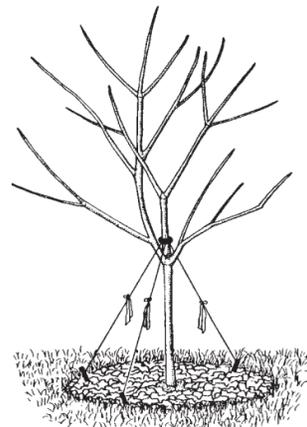
Staking:

If a tree is too tall to stand alone, it should be staked to avoid shifting in high winds.

Drive strong stakes into the ground, and use "tie tape" to avoid harming the bark of the tree. Tie the tape tightly around the stake, then loop it $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the main stem, in a figure "8". Tie off the loose end at the stake. The size of the tree will determine the number of stakes needed.

For trees with a trunk diameter up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, use two stakes. For those with a diameter up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, use three stakes (see Figure 1).

For trees with a diameter greater than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, use the three point method. Run the wire through short lengths of tubing to protect the tree. Twist the wires to tighten them to hold the tree firmly in place. Strips of brightly colored cloth can be tied on the wires to prevent people from tripping on them (see Figure 2).



Trees bigger than $2\frac{1}{2}$ "

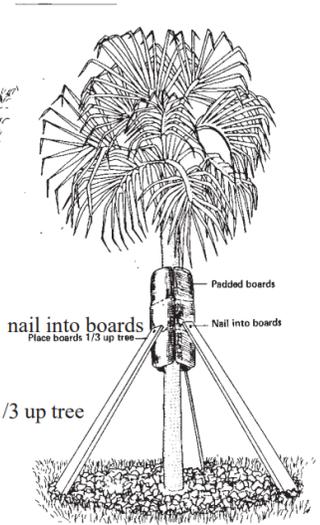


Figure 1.

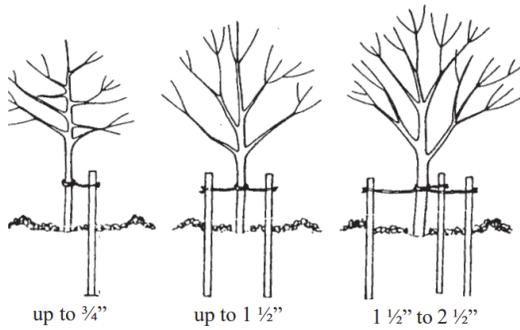


Figure 2.

Rockledge Gardens