

## City of Safety Harbor Guide To

# Planting and Establishing Trees

- 1) **Location:** First look up for wires or lights and make sure you selected the right tree for the right place. Start with a high quality tree, Florida grade 1 or Florida Fancy.
- 2) **Roots:** Remove tree from container and check the root system for circling roots or girdling roots. Cut the circling roots; cut and remove any girdling roots. If roots are matted, break them up or stretch out when planting.
- 3) **Dig Hole:** Find the top-most root growing from the trunk; you may have to remove some dirt. Measure from the top to the bottom of the root ball. Dig a shallow hole at a depth where the top root will be 2 inches above existing grade. Dig the hole 1 ½ times the width of the root ball.
- 4) **Setting Tree:** Set root ball into hole, and start backfilling with the original unamended soil. Slice a shovel into the edge of the hole to enlarge the hole and push soil against root ball. The tree will root in faster with the soil loosened up with a bigger hole. Do not add any fertilizer and do not cover the top of the root ball with soil. Soil on top of the root ball will impede water and air getting to the roots.
- 5) **Filling:** Straighten tree when backfilling and start to water in tree. Push a water hose into backfill to remove any air pockets and make soil into soup. Make sure the root ball is saturated with water.
- 6) **Mulch:** Build a small dirt ring 4 inches from the outside edge of the root ball to hold the water in when watering. Apply 3 inches of mulch outside of the dirt ring. Do not put mulch on top of the root ball. Apply only a small amount to cover for aesthetic purposes on rootball. Keep mulch 8 inches away from trunk of tree.
- \* 7) **Water:** Water tree daily for the first two weeks, then water every other day for 2 months, and finally water 2 days a week until tree is established. Measure the width of the tree trunk 6 inches above the ground. Use 2 gallons of water per inch of tree trunk. For example, if the tree trunk is 2 inches, use 4 gallons of water at each watering. A typical 2 inch tree will become established in about 6 months, but still need to water during dry periods for the first two years. Never irrigate or water if soil is still saturated. If you have an irrigation system, you can install a water bubbler inside tree ring to give tree additional water. This can be disconnected when tree is established.
- 8) **Staking:** The tree may need to be staked. For more tree planting and establishment information, do a Google search for "Ed Gilman landscape plants". This will bring you to the University of Florida web site which contains great tree and plant information, or call Art Finn, at 727-724-1555 ex. 1303 or email at

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