

PLANTING AND CARE GUIDELINES

1. Avoiding young tree losses is a result of careful planning and handling. Balled and burlap trees are especially susceptible to mishandling and therefore require special attention.
 - ◆ The burlap ball must be kept moist to avoid drying of the roots.
 - ◆ If planting is delayed, trees must be held in a shady area with some protection from winds. Burlap trees should not be held for more than two weeks.
 - ◆ When handling trees it is best to use two hands. While this is more time consuming it will help in avoiding problems. One of the biggest reasons for tree mortality is that the trees are dropped onto the ground. This shatters the soil ball and breaks the feeder roots sending the tree into a deeper shock. Rarely do these come back to a satisfactory level.
 - ◆ Trees should not be left in the field for an extended time period. The best practice is to place only those trees that can be planted that day.
2. For successful planting the soil should be moist but not saturated. Excessive moisture will hamper digging of the holes. If an auger is used the sides of the hole will become glazed creating water infiltration problems. To overcome this, a shovel should be used to break the lining. The depth of the hole should be approximately 11 inches, when the tree is placed into the hole it should sit on firm, undisturbed soil. It is best if the tree sits 1 – 2 inches above the nursery soil level, this allows for soil settling. The soil used to backfill the hole should be lightly tamped to eliminate air pockets; care must be taken not to hit the root ball. The tree should be held straight and in line with the other rows. If the balled trees are being planted, the burlap may be left on the root ball. The twine used to tie the top of the burlap should be removed from around the soil level of the tree and the burlap folded back. The twine and the burlap located underground will deteriorate within two months and will not present any problems.
3. After planting the trees they must be irrigated immediately. Sufficient water must be put on to give full water penetration of the root zone. Irrigation during the first month is very critical, care must be exercised to avoid over and under watering. Dry spots in the soil will hamper new root development and tree growth.
4. Fertilizer can be added after four to six weeks. The particular type can vary and will depend on the soil type of the orchard. Nitrogen is usually the most needed element during the early years of tree growth. As always care must be taken not to over-fertilize.
5. Pest and disease control starts well before planting of the trees. Working closely with a qualified pest control advisor will help to avoid any major problems. Pests, which can affect young trees, include, thrips, mites, worms, and in replant areas, nematodes. The main disease to watch out for would be Phytophthora. Products such as Ridomil and Aliete are very effective in combating Phytophthora when properly managed.