



PLANTING GUIDE

Helping people help the land by promoting projects through education to further sustainable use of natural resources

Resource Links

[Pollinator Gardens by The Bees Waggle](#)

[Colorado State University DougCo Extension, Yard and Garden](#)

[Colorado State Forest Service - Franktown Field Office, Publications](#)

[Water Wiser Program](#)

[Douglas County Conservation District, Planting Info](#)



Planting Guide

Congratulations on your new plants! The Douglas County Conservation District plant sale provides folks with native and adapted plants for your landscape. Proceeds go right back into Douglas County conservation programs. Conservation means the three R’s; Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Growing native plants reduces water waste (xeric) and benefits the native animals as habitat and food. Our mission is helping people help the land by promoting projects through education to further sustainable use of natural resources. Thank you for your patronage.

Follow these simple steps to ensure your plants thrive for years to come.

STEP 1 First and most importantly, **put your plant in the right place.** Make sure you’ve accounted for the mature size of your plant and its sunlight and anticipated water needs. Most native and adapted plants won’t need added soil amendments to thrive unless your soil is compacted.

You can quickly test for soil compaction by driving a screwdriver or straightened wire hanger into damp (not sopping and not bone-dry) soil. You want to get at least a foot down with relative ease. If you can’t, consider using a spade to loosen the soil and add compost to improve soil oxygen- and water-movement.



When to water?

Refer to the soil test in Step 1 for starters. Dry soil? Give them a soak. Note that a windy day removes moisture from the soil at a higher rate than usual.

Should I mulch?

Mulch provides a barrier which can help moisture stay put in the soil longer. Mulch can also add nutrients to your plants. So we recommend mulch!

- Next, dig a saucer-shaped hole no deeper than the rootball and at least three times as wide. *Do not amend the planting hole.*
- Place the rootball in the center of the hole and firm a “donut” of soil around the base of the rootball for stability.
- Backfill the rest of the hole with the unamended soil you removed and water-in to settle it. Do not cover the top of the rootball with soil.
- Do create a well with soil/mulch around your new plant to avoid water running off of the planting location.

STEP 3 Mulch your new plantings with wood chip mulch to help maintain soil moisture. Be sure not to mound mulch around the stem of your trees and shrubs which can lead to rot and insect problems. Apply 1”-2” of mulch over the rootball and 3”-4” over the backfill area. Your new plants will need *regular watering* through at least one growing season to get them established in their new home. Pat yourself on the back; *nice work!* [Check out the diagram on Page 3 as an example.](#)

STEP 2 Prepare your hole by considering the

roots. You aren’t likely to see your new plants’ roots more than once—so make sure you look closely and correct any damage or issues when planting. Look especially for roots—even small roots—that are growing in a circle around the container or trunk and cut them to encourage them to grow outward.

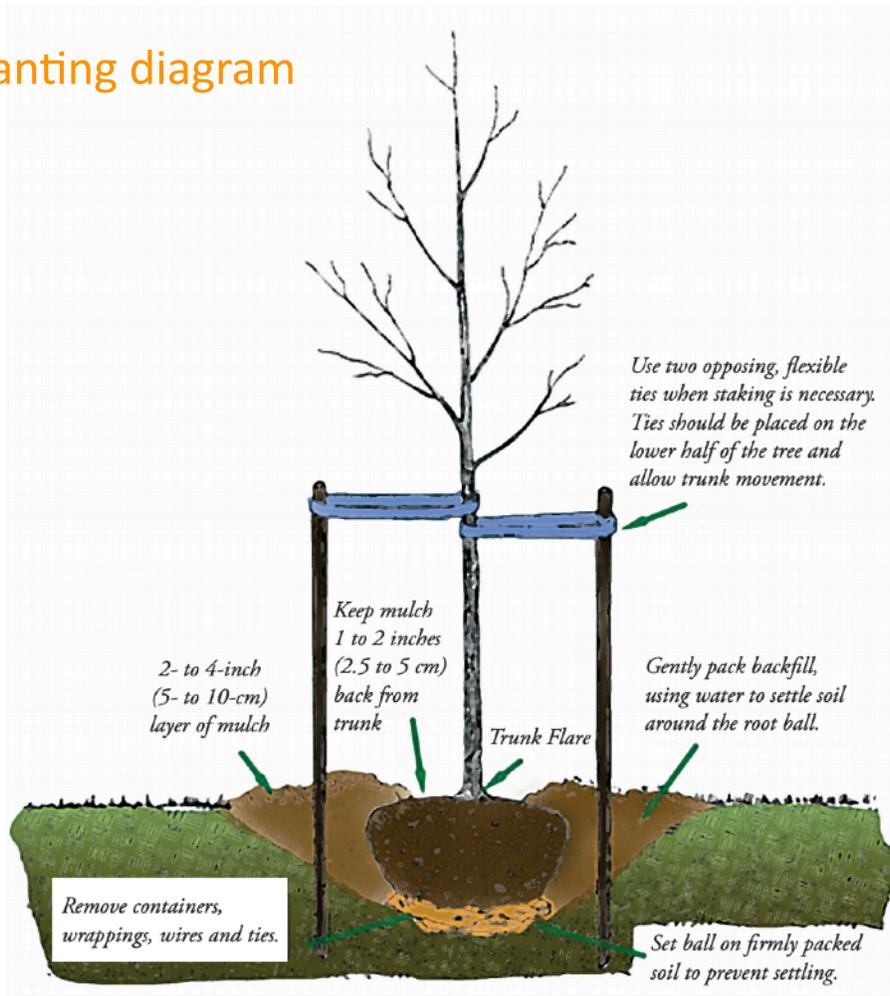
For bare-root trees and shrubs dig a hole as wide as the maximum spread of the roots—you will have to tease them apart. Make sure not to let the roots dry out at any point during planting. Keep them in the shade in a bucket of water or wrapped in wet burlap or fabric until planted. Place the plant crown, where the roots and stem meet, **at soil level.** Often the crown will be marked by a swelling of the stem (the root flare), a color change, or both.



For plants with potting medium (grown in tubes or pots) be sure to remove circling roots before planting. For 1- and 5-gallon pots, this is best accomplished by cutting the circular (when viewed from the top) rootball into a square as illustrated here.



Example planting diagram



Source: TreesAreGood.org

Protect your plants

Keep a close eye on your new plants to monitor for insect damage, disease or over exposure to sun.

If you live in an area with rabbits or deer, consider taking preventative measures, as one "experience" with one of these herbivores can be fatal for a young plant.

Rabbits can be excluded by constructing a cage around each tree of 1" or smaller wire mesh, at least two feet high and firmly attached to the ground. Fencing for deer should be 10 feet high. Consider using commercial deer repellent to discourage browsing.



ABOUT US

Helping people help the land by promoting projects through education to further sustainable use of natural resources

DouglasConserves.Org

[DouglasConserves.org/Learn/Rainwater Harvesting](https://DouglasConserves.org/Learn/RainwaterHarvesting)

Capture water to care for your plants.

DouglasConserves.org/Resources

Animals, plants, soil, water and Curriculum Resources for parents and teachers.

Grass seed and wildflower seed mixes are available for No Contact Pickup at our Franktown Office.



SCAN ME

Your Conservation District

The Douglas County Conservation District’s mission is helping people help the land by promoting projects through education to further sustainable use of natural resources while balancing the needs of agriculture with urban growth.

We accomplish this mission through strong partnerships across a wide variety of industries, government agencies and conservation groups.

Interested in volunteering with us? We have opportunities in teaching, planting and watering, bluebird trail maintenance and installation, to name a few options. Please contact our District Manager for more details.

Interested in joining the Board of Supervisors? Board Supervisors are volunteer, elected officials of this Special District. Please contact our District Manager for more details.

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