

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEW TREE EASTMORELAND TREE COMMITTEE



Preparing the Planting Site is Vital to New Tree Survival

- Stump grinding (*photo, below center*) - if the new tree is to go back in the same spot where the old tree was recently removed, that old tree's roots and stump must be ground down at least 3' deep from ground level to accommodate the new tree's roots AND so the roots have room to grow.
- Minimize the amount of wood chips from grinding that go back into the planting hole. Wood chips will eventually break down, but while they are doing so, soil nitrogen is not available to the new tree. It is best to put native soil back in the hole (not potting soil or compost). Native soil has nutrients that feed the tree via their roots. Native soil can be dug from another location in the planting strip or from the yard and put in the newly excavated hole.



Burlap Has to Go!

- Burlap on new trees (*photo, below left*) must be removed by the planting crew before the tree is planted. Although the burlap will decompose, it takes several years to do so and, in that time, tree roots will circle around inside the burlap since they cannot grow through it.
- Burlap also should not be left in the bottom of the planting hole.
- New trees need to be examined after the burlap is removed to ensure that roots are not circling. Circling roots (*photo, below center*) do not provide wind stability to the trees as they grow and can strangle the root crown, cutting off the flow of nutrients from roots to leaves.
- Breaking up the soil in the root ball and spreading the roots out after the burlap is removed can help roots grow outwards (*photo, below right*).



It's a Team Effort

Involvement of both the Tree Committee and the resident is essential. Both need to:

- Ensure that the correct tree is put in the correct spot.
- Help relocate the new tree if the planting spot will not work.
- See that the planting site is ready (stumps ground, hole deep enough, mostly native soil).
- Examine the new tree and make sure it is healthy, not damaged, and roots are not circling. If damage or circling roots are severe, the tree should not be planted, and a new one should be ordered.
- Ensure the tree is planted correctly: burlap is removed; the root crown is at or slightly above the soil line; and soil around the tree is level with the surrounding soil.



Any questions about preparing your planting site for your new tree? Email the Eastmoreland Tree Committee at eastmoreland.tree@gmail.com

Photo credits:

Family Tree Care (Stump in planting strip)

Manipal Institute (Stump grinder)

Missouri Botanical Garden (Circling roots)

University of Maryland Extension (Tree with burlap on root ball)

University of Nebraska (Tree in planting hole)

Sophie Braccini (Tree planting with nursery crew and residents)