



Thanks for purchasing trees from us.

We hope they have long and fruitful lives. Here's a guide to help them get the best start...

This guide focuses on planting bare-root fruit trees but most of it can also be applied to planting potted trees.

1. **Dig** a square hole about 50cm deep and wide enough to accommodate the entire length of all the tree's roots. Loosen the soil at the bottom of the hole with a garden fork, wrecking bar or similar.
2. **Add** to the hole some slow-release organic fertiliser such as seaweed meal (not calcified seaweed) or volcanic rockdust. You may also want to add some mycorrhizal fungus and/or some organic compost if the soil is poor. It's best to steer clear of manure at this point as it may 'burn' the tree's roots.
3. **Form** a mound using soil or compost that allows the tree's graft-union to be at least 4 inches above the ground, when placed atop.
4. **Hammer** stake into the hole at a 45 degree angle so there is a 1-2 inch gap between it and the tree's trunk. When possible the stake should be positioned pointing towards the direction of the prevailing wind, so as to reduce the possibility of rubbing/knocking. Ensure the point at which the stake and trunk cross is close to the ground – this is where you will tie them.
5. **Back-fill** the hole gradually with your hands. At this point it is good to think about the roots as being a 3-dimensional system – if you fill the hole without paying attention to the roots, they will be packed together and you won't be giving your tree the best start to it's new life. The best thing to do is ensure the roots remain at the level they are growing from – this means you need to fill the hole in layers, building the soil around the roots. In this way we also ensure that no air pockets, which can cause roots to dry out, are left. When all the roots are covered press the soil firmly with your hands and finally use your feet to gently compact the soil.
6. **Tie** the tree. Make a figure of 8 tie between the tree and stake using a material that is sturdy, weather-resistant and flexible (our favourites are punctured bike inner tubes or old tights!), allowing you to adjust the knot as the tree grows. Make the tie a couple of inches off the ground, where possible. Tying a tree this low down allows the encourages the tree to develop a stronger root system.
7. **Mulch**. One of the most overlooked but important aspects of planting a tree is mulching. A mulch is something put above ground around a tree or plant in order to retain moisture and lessen competition from other plants. Mulching well ensures that young trees are much less likely to die due to lack of water – the main cause of death for a newly-planted tree. Good mulches include leaves or leaf-mould, grass cuttings, woodchip (as long as it is at least 1 year old), and our favourite, used hops from breweries, which has excellent water-retention properties and smells lovely to boot! Where possible it is good to mulch an area of 1metre in diameter immediately around your tree at a depth of at least 2 inches.

Aftercare

- > Make sure you remove any growth from beneath the graft-point ie. the rootstock.
- > It is advisable to water your tree about once a week during Spring/Summer, especially during dry spells.
- > Keeping a healthy layer of mulch around your tree is vital.
- > Planting ground cover crops around your tree (especially nitrogen fixers like clover, mineral accumulators such as comfrey or fruiting plants like alpine strawberry) is a great idea.

Rootstocks

Here's a list of rootstocks your tree might be on and some information about them:

Apples:

MM106: moderate vigour - 4.5-5.5m (12-15ft)

M26: semi dwarfing - 3-4.5m (8-11ft)

Pears:

Quince A: semi-dwarfing 3-4.5m (10-15ft)

Quince C: dwarfing 2.5-3m (6-10ft). Needs fertile soil and lifelong staking.

Plums:

St Julien A: moderate vigour 3.6-5.5m (10-14ft)

Pixy: semi-dwarfing 3-3.6m (10-12ft)

Cherries:

Gisela 5: semi-dwarfing 3m (10ft). Needs good soil and lifelong staking.

Colt: semi-vigorous 3.5-5m (11-18ft)

Details are relevant to Northern climates, like that of Sheffield.

n.b. Semi-vigorous trees (e.g. mm106) probably need staking for no longer than 3 years. Semi-dwarfing (m26) and dwarfing (m9) trees will probably need staking most of their lives depending on site conditions.