Planting Trees Around Your House

For further information please contact the Forestry Division of the Missouri Department of Conservation at 573/751-4115 or write to us at P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180.

Planting Your Seedling Correctly

The majority of tree's feeder roots are in the upper 6 inches of soil where they compete with grass roots for oxygen, moisture and nutrients. Feeder roots thrive on soil that is loose, moist and fertile--conditions often lacking in soils around homes. In recognition of this, you might consider a planting area, rather than just a hole.

1. Plant your tree as soon as possible.
2. If you are not able to plant it the day you receive it, place it in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator. DO NOT FREEZE!
3. Select a planting site that will give the tree room to grow and has the correct light conditions.
4. Dig the initial hole as deep as the root system and about a foot wide.
5. Remove the seedling from the bag and place it in the hole. Make sure the roots are spread out and are not crowded or bent.
6. Crumble the soil back around the roots and pack firmly with your hands.
7. Water the tree thoroughly to finish packing the soil around the roots.
8. Mulch the planting area to a depth of 2 inches and to a radius of 9 to 12 inches around the tree. Organic mulches such as compost, wood chips or decorative bark may be used.
9. New trees need the equivalent of 1 to 1.5 inches of rainfall per week during the first four years. Water the tree weekly during dry periods.

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