



**THE
SHRUB
GUY™**

(603) 889-2251 or (603) 380-6050

*Taxus Capitata Landscaping
& Shrub Planting Company, LLC
www.TheShrubGuy.com*

"Always doing my part to keep the world green"

TRANSPLANTING GUIDELINES

Transplanting Is a Shock!

Even healthy and correctly planted trees¹ must recover from the shock of transplanting before they can live long, healthy lives. When a tree is transplanted, many roots are lost. The tree has to regenerate its root system and may need to become acclimated to a new soil type. Although it may put out new leaves, it usually will not grow normally while in shock. Larger trees take longer to recover from transplant shock than smaller ones. As a rule of thumb, allow at least one year of recovery per inch of stem diameter.



Wilting is a common symptom of transplant shock.

To help trees overcome transplant shock and start on the road to long-term health:

- Purchase healthy, problem-free plants.
- Dig the planting hole the correct depth and as wide as possible.
- Remove twine, burlap, wire, and plastic where they could interfere with roots, stems, or branches.
- Water after planting, and regularly when the soil is dry.
- Mulch around the base of the tree.
- Maintain a stress-free environment.

¹References to trees in this publication are intended to include shrubs as well.

Healthy, Problem-Free Plants

Healthy stems should:

- Be free of wounds, cankers (dead areas), and other damage.
- Have a single leader (main stem) if it's a tree. Even though some trees develop multiple leaders as they age, most shouldn't when they're young. Low, multiple leaders often have poor branch attachments that are more likely to fail in wind or ice storms as the tree gets larger.

Graft unions often give the base of the tree trunk a crooked appearance. This is okay and usually disappears in a few years. **Do not** bury the graft union when planting.

Wounds increase the chances of decay in the stem and predispose the tree to structural and health problems.

Healthy roots should:

- Be at or near the surface of the container or balled and burlapped (B&B) soil ball. Don't assume the first, main roots (usually at least the thickness of a pencil) are at the top, because often they are not. If you can't see the main roots, use a piece of wire as a probe to ensure they are not buried by more than 4 inches of soil. Avoid buying trees with more than 4 inches of soil over their roots.
- Be alive, unbroken, and light-colored (at the tips).
- Grow away from the stem. In container stock, look for and remove roots circling around the container's inside edge.



The graft union will disappear as the tree grows. Burying it when planting places the roots too deep in the soil.

The average life span of landscape trees is much shorter than the life span of forest trees. Although many factors affect tree health, landscape trees often die prematurely because they were planted incorrectly or were unhealthy from the start.

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TRANSPLANTING GUIDELINES (Continued)

Care After Planting

Your job isn't done with the tree in the ground. Ongoing care is important to get your plant off to a good start.

Watering

After all the soil has been replaced, thoroughly water the tree. Soak the soil close to the trunk. Water often during the first growing season. Adjust the watering schedule for the season and your soil type. Poorly drained soils require less frequent watering. The best way to determine when to water is to feel the soil where the roots are growing. If it is dry, water it.



As a rule, use 1 to 1-1/2 gallons of water per inch of tree diameter per watering.

Never let established trees and shrubs become moisture stressed, no matter how long they've been in your landscape. Check the soil for moisture by digging a hole 6 to 8 inches deep and 3 to 6 feet from the trunks of mature trees. If it feels dry, water deeply (at least 6 to 8 inches). Plants can be watered whenever the ground is not frozen, and fall watering often helps the trees through long winters.

Mulching

Hardwood chips or other organic mulches are best to retain moisture while slowly adding nutrients to the soil. Add mulch periodically. Keeping 2 to 4 inches of mulch over the root systems of plants greatly reduces the need for fertilization, irrigation, and weeding. And mulch is a perfect barrier to lawn mowers and string trimmers. However, NEVER pile mulch up against the stems of your plants.



Place mulch 3 to 4 inches deep in a ring that covers the entire planting area.



Pull mulch away from the trunk of the tree to prevent injury from excess moisture and temperature, and potential stem cankers.

Staking

Trees will not need to be staked unless they cannot stand up by themselves, are in a very windy area, or need to be protected. If you do stake, remove all straps and lines after the trees are established, usually one year. If the tree is still unstable after one year, be sure to loosen the straps and lines to allow for stem growth.



Staking straps should be wide and flat, and attached one-third to two-thirds of the way up the stem.



Lines should be loose enough to allow for some wind movement.



Pruning

The first 15 to 20 years of a tree's life are the most important years for development. Inspect trees annually and remove any dead wood, rubbing branches, multiple leaders (with few exceptions, such as crabapples), and weakly attached branches.



Protecting Stems

Hardware cloth and/or light-colored, loose winter stem protection devices can reduce damage to stems from winter critters and cold. When necessary, put them on in the late autumn and remove them at the end of the winter.