



GARDENING BY THE MOON

FALL TREE PLANTING

Submitted by

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Many of you lost trees during the winter storm URI in February of this year. For those of you who are going to replace your trees, October and November is a good time to plant new trees in Texas. Fall planting allows the tree to root into the surrounding soil during the winter for better survival during the heat of the following summer.

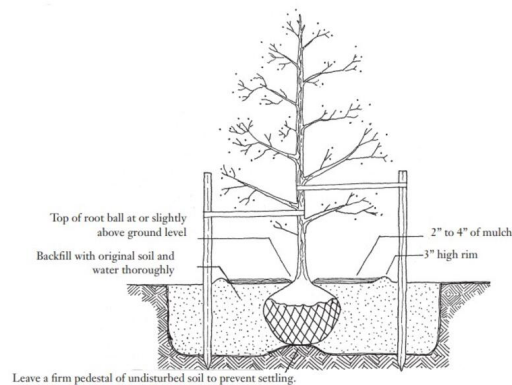
The first step in this process is to select a good quality tree. I recommend you locate a 2 ½ - 3 ½ inch trunk diameter tree. The diameter should be measured 6 inches off the ground. The diameter is the width of the trunk. These trees should be 12' - 16' in height and 4' - 6' in width. Trees should be well-branched. The branches should be evenly spaced. Avoid trees with a double leader (two equal branches in the middle of the tree). The first branches should start at a height of 5' - 7'. A tree to fit these guidelines will be a 65-gallon to 100-gallon container and should not be root bound. B & B trees (balled and burlapped) should have a root ball width of 28 to 38 inches and a depth of 24 to 30 inches.



Container Tree



B & B Tree



Correct Tree Planting

Step two is to plant the tree correctly. For most of you, I suggest hiring a professional to plant your tree. They plant trees every day and have all the equipment to handle the tree and plant the tree correctly. Whether you plant or have a professional to plant, the tree should be planted 2" to 4" higher than the existing soil line so when the tree settles, it will be even with the existing soil line. Stake the tree in 3 directions to prevent tree from blowing over in the wind until establishment.

Step three is critical for your new tree. Water the tree thoroughly after planting and then water the plant once or twice a week. Do not over water these trees. The tree company that plants your tree can provide watering information for the soils in your yard.

Step four is proper fertilization of your tree. Fertilize after planting and at least 3 times per year for the first three years. After three years, fertilize your trees once or twice per year. Use a fertilizer that has a high first number (nitrogen) on the fertilizer bag and read to make sure it is slow-release. Apply $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of fertilizer per inch trunk diameter. Spread the fertilizer evenly from the trunk of the tree to 2 feet past the drip line of the tree. Water the fertilizer in with a water hose. Yes, you can use tree stakes to fertilize. Follow the label instructions for your size of tree.

Trees can be mulched after planting but do not get carried away with too much mulch. Mulch should be kept away from the trunk and I prefer a mulch depth of 2 inches.