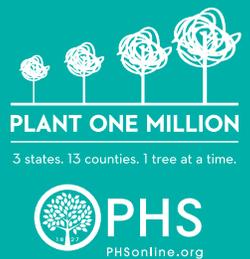
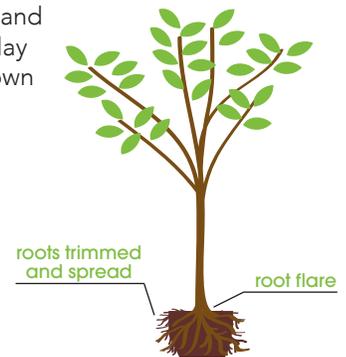


# How to plant a container tree

See how-to videos at [PlantOneMillion.org](http://PlantOneMillion.org)



- 1 Be sure to handle your tree by the container; never carry or move a tree by the trunk or branches.
- 2 Remove all tags and twine before planting the tree.
- 3 Prune any dead or damaged branches. Removing healthy branches, especially during the first year, adds to the stress of a newly planted tree, so restrict your pruning to dead and damaged branches only.
- 4 Now you are ready to remove the tree from its container. Hold the edge of the pot and gently pull the tree upward from the base of the trunk. If the tree doesn't lift out easily, lay it down and press on the sides of the container to loosen the root ball. If roots have grown through the bottom of the pot, you may have to cut the container off.
- 5 Next, locate the root flare. This is where the trunk widens and the roots begin. Gently scrape away soil in order to find the flare. The aim is to position the root flare slightly above ground level.
- 6 Container grown trees almost always have numerous encircling roots within the root ball, which must be corrected at planting. Use a serrated kitchen knife or axe to cut from the outer edge of the root ball toward the trunk in 4-6 places to sever and spread circling roots radially. Hand loosen smaller circling roots.



- 7 Dig a hole at least twice the width of the root ball. It is critical that the depth of the hole places the root flare slightly above ground level.
- 8 To prevent settling, make sure the bottom of the root ball sits on undisturbed soil. If you dig too deep, return some soil to the hole and pack it down before placing the tree into the hole.
- 9 Make sure the tree is straight and stable before you begin to backfill the hole. Tamp down the soil as you go to remove air pockets.
- 10 Now use soil to form a ring, 3' wide, around the trunk to retain water.
- 11 Mulch inside the ring with clean, organic material using the 3-3-3 method: 3" of mulch in a 3' ring around the tree, leaving a 3" gap between the mulch and trunk.

- 12 Water thoroughly until the entire planting hole is completely saturated.
- 13 And remember, the most important factor in successfully establishing a tree is deep weekly watering for its first two years. Water 15-20 gallons once a week, increasing to twice a week during drought.



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