

# 5 steps to plant a tree



[DANECLIMATEACTION.ORG/INITIATIVES/TREE-CANOPY](http://DANECLIMATEACTION.ORG/INITIATIVES/TREE-CANOPY)



# 1

## Call Digger's Hotline

Call 811 or visit [diggershotline.com](http://diggershotline.com) to mark under-ground utilities. Check for overhead lines. Make sure to site your tree in a spot that matches its needs.

# 2

## Find the root flare

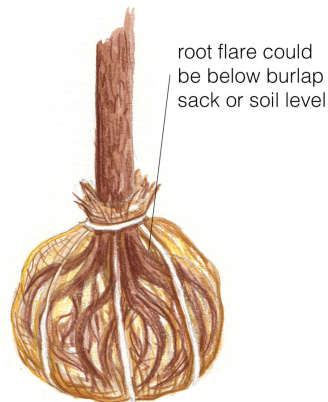
The root flare is the bulge between the stem and the roots. Be careful not to confuse a graft with a root flare.



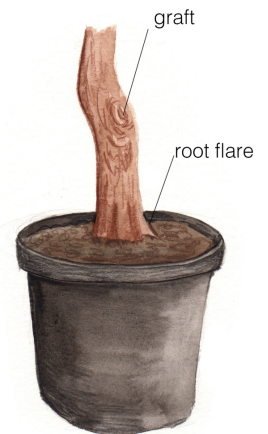
bare root tree



potted tree



balled and burlapped tree

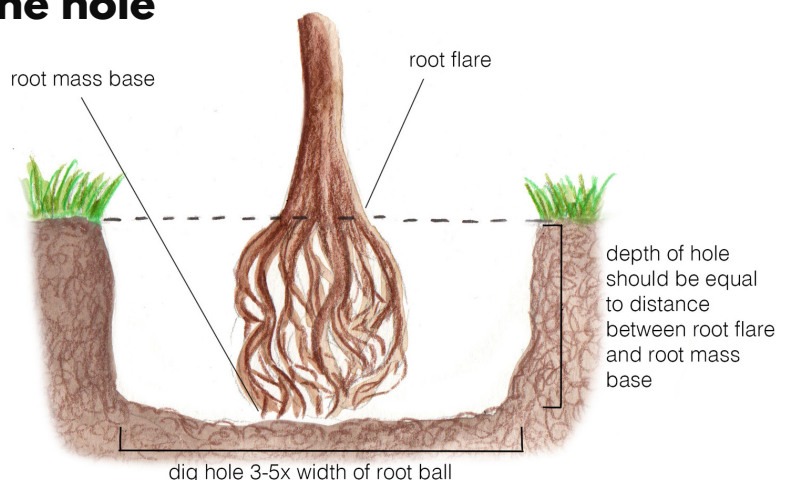


Some trees are grafted. If there is a graft, it will be above the root flare.

# 3

## Measure for and dig the hole

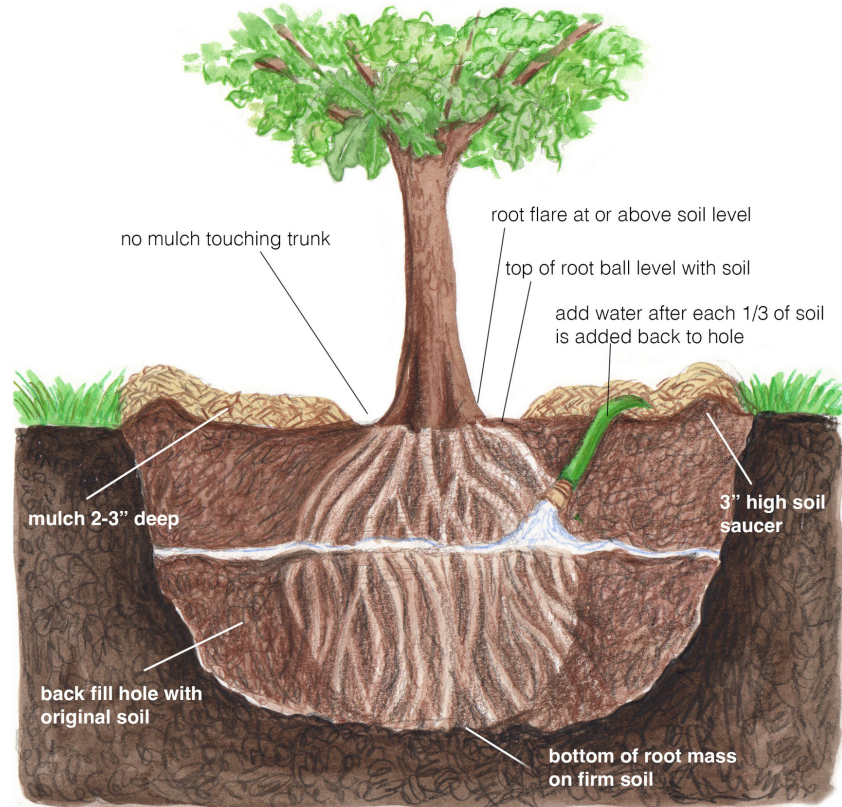
Measure from the root flare to the bottom of the root ball to determine hole depth. Dig the hole 3-5 times the diameter of the root ball.



# 4

## Set the root ball in hole and water

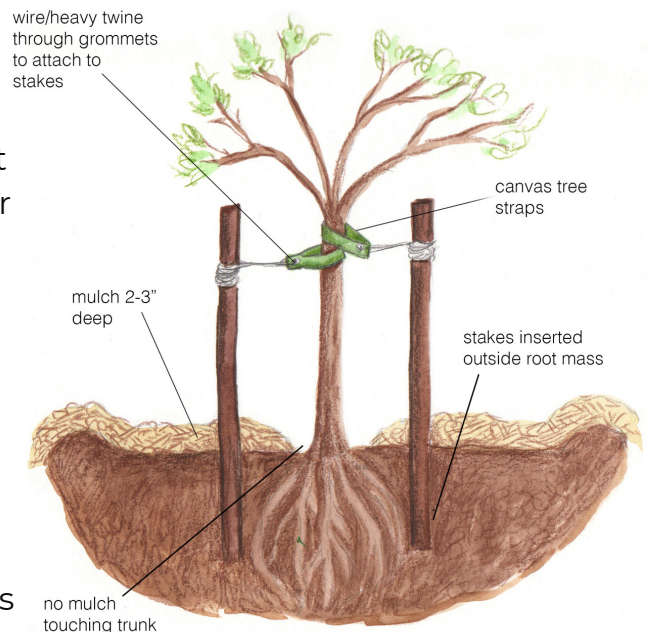
Remove the wire basket, if present. Use a tarp to slide the tree into the hole if the root ball is heavy. Remove burlap (if present). Spread and separate roots if circling. Fill the hole in thirds with soil originally removed. Eliminate any air pockets after each addition. Water and let drain after each soil addition.



# 5

## Finish up

- **Build a 'soil saucer'** (narrow berm) at least 3" high around the hole edge for a water reservoir. Fill it with water, and let it drain.
- **Mulch** no more than 3" deep inside the saucer area. Mulch should not touch the trunk.
- **Stake** bare root and small trees for one year only. Install two opposing stakes outside the root mass. Loop flat canvas tree straps with grommets around the trunk. Attach to stakes with wire via the grommets.



Illustrations by Evie Woltzil Richner  
<https://www.eviewoltzilrichner.com>