

- Contact Holey Moley (within Indiana 1-800-382-5544 or 811) to locate any underground utilities before you dig.
- Keep the root ball well watered and the tree in a shaded place until you are ready to plant.
- Remove all tags, labels, and roping from the tree canopy.
- Determine the root flare on the ball and burlap tree before the planting hole is dug so that the depth of the planting hole can be measured properly.
  - Remove twine and open the burlap from around the trunk area of the tree. Pull back the excess soil around the trunk to locate root flare and main order roots. *(The root flare is the enlarged area where stem tissue begins to differentiate into main order and lateral roots. The top of the root ball is not always the root flare.)*
  - Measure the distance from the base of the root flare to the bottom of the root ball to determine the depth of the planting hole. *(The root flare should be at finish grade and the main order roots just below finish grade. The root flare may be hidden within the root ball.)*
- Dig the planting hole to this depth and at least two times the diameter of the root ball wide.
- Break up the sides of the planting hole to avoid glazing. Leave the bottom of the hole undisturbed to help support it and reduce settling.
- Before the tree is placed in the planting hole, use bolt cutters to remove the bottom of the basket cutting the basket horizontally. This is also a good time to remove the bottom portion of burlap if the root ball is structurally sound. If the tree is container grown, cut and remove the container.
- Roll the tree into planting hole by the root ball, not the trunk. Be careful not to break off the connection between the roots and trunk. *(The root flare should be at or slightly above finish grade.)*
- Balance the tree upright, straight and center. Visually check from two opposing 90 degree sides for straightness. Make any adjustments using shovels to position the root ball for straight trunk orientation. Do not make adjustments by manipulating the trunk.
- Use bolt cutters to remove the rest of the wire basket by cutting the basket vertically and peeling off the basket.
- Remove any remaining package material including twine, strings, burlap, staples, nails, or plastic, exposing the root ball.
- Prune dead or crushed roots and straighten or cut circling roots. Make clean cuts to promote new root generation.
- Backfill using the existing soil up to where the root flare begins to branch, gently tamp. Fill soil just above where roots begin to laterally branch from the trunk. *(A tree planted even 1" too deep may form a dysfunctional root system).*
- Prune only dead, broken, injured branches or double leaders. Do not paint wounds.
- Remove any additional transportation material including tree wrap, tape and string from the trunk.
- Pour five to ten gallons of water slowly around the tree to eliminate any air pockets.
- Stake and brace the tree, if necessary. Support the tree but allow it to move or sway.
- Mulch evenly with 2 - 3" of hardwood mulch at least to the diameter tree crown. Keep mulch 3" away from the trunk.
- Fertilize the tree only after the tree has been installed for one year.