

## NEW TREE PLANTING

Tree planting projects should follow the Best Management Practices for Tree Planting, a special companion publication to the ANSI A300 Part 6: Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Maintenance – Standard Practices (Transplanting). This booklet covers bare root, containerized, and balled and burlap tree stock. Specifications are summarized here:

- **Time of Year** - The ideal time to plant a tree is when it is in a dormant condition, either in early spring before bud-break, or in the fall, after leaves have dropped. Weather conditions at these times are generally cool, allowing plants to establish new roots before the onset of harsh temperatures.
- **Location** – Visualize the tree in 20 years. Consider site restrictions (available growing space, soil, pavement, overhead/underground utilities, etc.) Call local utility services at least 2 days prior to digging to locate underground utilities. (Usually 811 or 1-800-424-5555 in MT)
- **Tree selection** – Carefully inspect trees and only purchase those that have a strong stem and no physical damage. Avoid trees with circling roots, severe pruning cuts, dead bark or signs of insects and disease.
- **Site preparation** – Dig a hole three times as wide as the root ball, but not deeper. Amending soil is not necessary unless planting in disturbed sites or poor soil quality. Break up compacted soil on sides of the hole, and leave bottom firm.
- **Tree preparation** – 1) Identify root flare - part of the trunk where the roots spread out at the base of the tree. Root flare should be visible after the tree has been planted. You may have to remove some soil from the top of the root ball to find the flare. 2) Cut away strings and burlap or plastic from around the trunk. If tree is container grown, carefully remove container.
- **Tree placement** – Lift tree into planting space by the root ball, not the trunk. Ensure tree is at proper depth and never plant too deep. Trunk flare and top of root ball should be at grade. Balance tree upright at center of planting space. Pull back burlap as much as possible without removing soil from the root ball.
- **Fill with soil** – Fill the hole while watering, periodically pausing to gently tamp base, ensuring the tree is firmly settling in the planting space. Finish filling soil just below the trunk flare.
- **Mulch** – Apply 2 inches of organic material i.e. wood chips or similar composted material. Leave bare soil around the trunk. Remove any tags, wrap, flagging, etc. from the tree. Such items were only meant as protection during transportation and installation.
- **Only stake if necessary** - Trees will establish more quickly and develop stronger trunk and root systems if they are not staked at the time of planting. However, protective staking may be required on sites where equipment, animal damage, vandalism or windy conditions are concerns. Use a wide, flexible tying material to avoid injuring trunk and allow the tree to move or sway. Remove staking and ties after one year.
- **Establishment** – Do not fertilize at planting time. Water regularly throughout the first growing season (about once a week unless significant rainfall is received), but do not overwater. Keep lawn mowers and string trimmers away from tree to avoid wounding bark. Only prune dead or injured branches at time of planting.
- **Long term care & protection** – Have a 3-year annual inspection program to replace mulch, provide small tree training (light pruning cuts), and check for signs of stress, insects, disease, or vandalism. Keep trunk area free and clear of weeds and other competing vegetation. Put a fence around tree if site is a feeding ground for rabbits, deer, or other wildlife.

