

Tree Planting Tips

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This year we have not received enough precipitation to adequately settle holes that have been backhoed for planting. If possible, irrigate these fields now if needed. Trees planted over unsettled holes will sink leading to crooked trees susceptible to crown rot.

Keep tree roots moist while in transit. Do not cover with clear plastic or you can “solarize” the roots. Do not plant when soil is too wet or sides of the holes can become “glazed”. Keep trees in cold storage if field conditions are not suitable for planting. If trees are “healed in” before planting, select a site free of pests, ideally in a fumigated portion of the field.

Trees benefit from being planted on berms, even in sandy soil. Cut only excessively long, broken, or diseased roots. Roots DO NOT need to be pruned to be “balanced” with the top – the bigger the root system the better. Spray – not dip- the roots with Galltrol[®] or Norbac[®], (*Agrobacterium radiobacter* bacteria that prevents crown gall). Dig the hole to fit roots – do not cram the tree into a hole that is too small. Do not throw fertilizers or other amendments into the bottom of the hole. If you feel your soil needs to be amended, this should have been done at the time of soil modification (backhoeing or ripping). Plant trees so that the graft union is well above the soil line. Plan for 2-3 inches of settling. Trees should be tanked-in with 1-2 gallons of water in most soils of Stanislaus County to close air pockets and prevent root desiccation. Be sure to paint young trees with a dilute solution of white latex paint especially if milk cartons are used on late planted trees. Be sure to manage weeds. Fertilize often with small amounts of nitrogen fertilizer.