

This has been adapted directly from John Clements, Director of Horticulture at SDBotanic Garden and posted on SDGardeners Facebook site. It has been edited to remove the references to the SDG&E tree program who has given hundreds of trees to SD homeowners without directions on planting. You should be able to copy and paste the text below.

How you plant your trees is extremely important! Adapted from John Clements, Director of Horticulture at SD Botanic Garden

Here is a primer on tree planting.

- 1) Don't plant them until cool weather is here.
- 2) The larger the container, the more important it is to wait.
- 3) You'll need to make sure that there are no circling roots; no girdling roots (roots crossing and squeezing off other roots like a boa constrictor). Gently finesse or cut away bad roots as I've described.
- 4) Figure out where the flare is (It may even be below the top of the soil level in the container), you can search your computer for illustrations showing what to look for. The tree should be planted so that root flare is no deeper than the final planting depth level. This is very important for the future longevity of your tree.
- 5) Dig the planting hole depth no deeper than the height of the root ball of the tree. Dig the width of the planting hole twice as wide as the width of the root ball. Remove any large rocks.
- 6) Do not amend the soil removed from the hole that will be used as backfill. The tree will do best and adapt better if planted straight into the native soil it will occupy.
- 7) If trees will be watered manually with a hose, make a donut basin. Form a ring 8-12" away from the trunk. Form another ring just beyond the root ball. When watering, fill between the two rings, not the area nearest the trunk. Keep the area between the first ring and the trunk dry. Put 3-4" of mulch in the 2nd ring and beyond the root ball.
- 8) It is best to become the best gopher hunter you can learn to be and frequently inspect for gophers. Gopher baskets help, but aren't fool proof and can lull gardeners into a false sense of security. Commercial gopher baskets are best; homemade from chicken wire are better than nothing, but basically useless and don't last long at all, usually less than a season.
- 9) Remove the nursery stakes that came with the tree. Put in new stakes (2), parallel to each other one foot from the trunk. Loosely, but firmly tie each stake to the trunk. The tree should be able to flex back and forth slightly, but prevented from falling over or snapping.