



TREE TENDERS®

A PROGRAM OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Caring for Your Tree

Water

Water is crucial for your tree's survival, particularly during the first year after planting.

- Water your tree when the soil is dry beneath the mulch. Apply approximately 15-20 gallons of water once a week from March until the ground freezes, and as often as twice a week during hot and dry weather.
- Trickle water onto the soil surface using a hose, or allow water to seep from a 5 gallon bucket with small holes in the bottom. Watering slowly and deeply is best.

Weed and Clean

Weeds and trash can prevent water from reaching your tree's roots, and cause a decline in your tree's health.

- Weed and clean the area around your tree periodically and prevent toxic substances like dog urine, leaking garbage, car oil or de-icing salt from entering the soil. These substances can kill your tree.

Cultivate

Loosening the soil surface around your tree encourages water and air to enter the soil.

- Anytime is a good time to cultivate the soil around your tree; try doing it seasonally!
- If the soil surface around your tree becomes compacted, loosen the first few inches of soil and break up any large clumps. Avoid damaging any large woody roots.

Mulch

Mulch helps conserve water, controls weeds, keeps roots cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter, prevents lawn mower damage and prevents soil compaction.

- Maintain a 2-4" layer of mulch around your tree, taking care NOT to pack it against the trunk, be sure to expose the root flare. Recommended mulches include: wood chips, composted leaves and pine needles.
- Always remember to weed and cultivate the soil, before mulching.
- Do not fertilize a newly planted tree; granular chemical fertilizer is a salt that could dehydrate the tree.

Plant Flowers

As flowers wilt in the summer heat, they will remind you to water your tree.

- Plant annuals such as impatiens, begonias and marigolds, around your tree. Avoid perennials that will compete with your tree.

Protect

Tree roots require water and air for survival. Compacted soil and cemented pits prevent water and air from reaching tree roots.

- Avoid compacting the soil: don't pile trash, walk, or drive around the tree's roots.
- Never cement over the surface of your tree pit.

Bark is necessary for protecting the trunk and maintaining tree health.

- Keep car doors, dogs, string trimmers and bicycles away from the trunk to avoid potential bark wounds.
- If you lay dry brick or stone around your tree, keep the material at least 6 inches away from the trunk and check each year to maintain this space (pavers placed too close to the trunk can strangle the bark as the trunk gets wider).

Remove Stakes and Straps

Straps left on your tree for longer than a year may cut into the bark and strangle the tree. Remove and discard stakes and straps one year after planting. For newly planted trees, prune only to remove broken branches.