



## **A Guide on Caring for Your Newly Installed Plants**

In order to keep your new plants alive and healthy, there are some maintenance steps involved. For the first 2 years, your plants will require water and nutrients, that you must supply. Every plant is different and have their own specific needs that should be researched before purchasing. Every site is also different, which will change how much water and fertilizer that your plants will need. Below are a few basic tips to encourage health and growth of your new plants.

### **Spring & Summer Watering:**

During the warm months, you should be watering 2 or 3 times a week (more if your plant came from a pot). If you have a water well around your plant, fill it with water, and allow to drain into the roots. If no water well is present, place your garden hose a few feet from the trunk, and turn the water to a trickle for 15-25 minutes, for basketed trees. Potted plants will need much less water each time than basketed trees, but will need it much more often, as potting soil does not hold moisture like normal soil does.

Most issues incurred with new trees are water related - either too much, or not enough. When in doubt, wait a few days after watering, and dig down about a foot deep, beside the rootball. The soil should feel moist to the touch - it should not feel hard and dry, nor sloppy and muddy. Hard, dry soil indicates you need to increase the water the plant is receiving. Sloppy, muddy soil indicates you need to decrease the water the plant is receiving.

If you have a newly installed irrigation system, or new sod that is seeing frequent water, keep an eye on your plants, as this is a circumstance where they can drown.

### **Fall Watering:**

When the ground starts to freeze, typically in late October or early November, you should water your plants one last time. Leave your garden hose a foot or so away from the trunk, on a slow trickle for around half an hour. This will ensure the roots of the tree receive water to "freeze in" for the winter. Water is needed to freeze to ice around the roots. This ice acts to protect the roots from "freeze drying" during winter. Plants that came from a pot, will require less water to "freeze in" than field grown basketed plants, as their rootball is not as deep into the ground

When the first few winter frosts occur, it is wise to stop watering. This is when the trees stop growing and starts shutting down for winter. Continuing to water past this point, may keep your plant "awake", preventing it from properly going into winter hibernation.

### **Winter Watering:**

Do not water your plants during the winter, or during a Chinook, as water is warmer than the frozen ground, and could defrost the rootball prematurely. This could lead to the tree "waking up" early, and then freezing, which will likely cause your plant to perish.



### **Fertilizing:**

Fertilizing is highly recommended once in the spring and once in early summer. We advise you to use a 20-20-20 general fertilizer, or a 10-52-10 root starter, for any newly installed plant material. We recommend a dry pellet form fertilizer that slow releases over 6-8 weeks. We do not recommend liquid fertilizer at any time, as it can burn the roots. Please note that all fertilizers are different. Be sure to read & follow instructions regarding application. Do not fertilize plants in the fall, as this may promote more growth, and your plants may not shut down for winter.

### **Pruning:**

Prune only the damaged or broken branches after planting is completed. Any other heavy pruning, shaping, or tip removal, should be done when the plant is dormant (late fall or winter). In general, a few light prunes here and there during the warm months should be fine. Best practice, to reduce stress on the plant, is to prune only during dormant months.

Do not prune elm between April 1 and September 30, as there is a provincial wide law prohibiting it. This is to prevent Dutch Elm Disease from ravaging our elm trees.

### **Transplant Shock:**

All our growing and harvesting techniques are tailored towards reducing the plant's stress as much as possible. No matter how carefully a plant is harvested and planted, they will stress out as they adjust to their new home.

In the early fall, of the first season at their new homes, newly installed plant material may turn their fall colors, and drop their leaves early. Newly installed coniferous plant material may experience premature needle shed, shedding the innermost needles. This is due to transplant shock - The tree shutting down early to focus on root growth, as to heal into its new environment. This is not something to worry about if you have properly cared for your plants after installation.

If you planted a fruiting tree or shrub, it may take 2-4 years before the plant feels comfortable enough to produce fruits. Fruits require an enormous amount of energy and water to produce, and your plant may focus on root growth, instead of fruit, for the first while. The plant may also decide to produce a smaller number of fruits, or very small fruits.

A few other signs of transplant shock may be present during the first few seasons, such as brown edges on the leaves, a few branches dying back, and less than normal growth. Leaves with brown edges will fall off in the fall and be replaced with normal ones during the 2nd season. Branch dieback can be pruned back to the next intersection, and usually should not occur after the first season (unless other issues are present in the environment). Your plant's growth may be a bit slow for the first few years, as the plant focuses on root growth to heal into the new environment. Usually by the start of season 3 in its new home, the plant should achieve its regular growth rate again.