



HERITAGE TREES: PLANTING HISTORY

COMMUNITY PLANTING
RESOURCE GUIDE

SPRING 2026

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Month xx, 2026

Media Contact:

Name, Title, Organization

emailaddress@emailaddress.com

phone number if desired

**[COMMUNITY NAME] to Plant Heritage Tree as Part of
America 250-Ohio Commemoration**

CITY NAME, OH (Month xx, 2026) — A ceremonial tree planting will take root in **[Community Name]** as part of the **Heritage Trees: Planting History** program under **America 250-Ohio**, the official state commission responsible for spearheading Ohio's celebrations and commemorations around America's semiquincentennial in 2026.

The Heritage Trees program officially kicked off in Lima, on Arbor Day 2025 (April 25, 2025), and will ensure the planting of a commemorative tree in communities across the state.

Started in 2025 and continuing throughout 2026, Heritage Trees will be planted in all 88 of Ohio's counties. In **[Community Name]**, the tree will be planted in **[Location]** on **[Day/Date]**. **[Location]** was chosen as the site for the Heritage Tree because of the **[details about the location where tree will be planted]**.

The Heritage Trees initiative draws inspiration from the historic Liberty Tree in Boston during the Revolutionary War period. The Heritage Trees program aims to commemorate America's 250th anniversary by planting native-to-Ohio white oak trees across the state. Throughout the celebration, America 250-Ohio will offer each Ohio county a white oak tree in honor of America's 250th birthday. Sites selected in each county could be a city that acts as the county seat or participates in the [Tree City USA](#) program.

Insert quote from city official here.

White oak trees were chosen as Heritage Trees because they grow in many soil types, resist most tree diseases and are native to Ohio. A specific white oak species will be chosen based on the county climate and purchased from a reputable Ohio tree nursery.

The Heritage Trees program is made possible by Presenting Sponsor Cenovus Energy and Supporting Sponsors Ohio Liquor and The Lubrizol Foundation. The program was created in partnership with Dawes Arboretum, Cox Arboretum MetroPark, Holden Forests & Gardens, Keep Ohio Beautiful, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Rowe Arboretum, and Secret Arboretum.

About Community Name

Insert boilerplate about community here

About America 250-Ohio

In 2026, the United States will celebrate its semiquincentennial, which is the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Each state has been encouraged to create a celebration and commemoration of this anniversary to reflect the unique character and contributions of each state to the nation over the past 250 years. Ohio is fully embracing this opportunity. The Ohio Commission for the Semiquincentennial (aka America 250-Ohio Commission or AM250-OH) was created by the Ohio legislature and launched on March 1, 2022. The charge of the AM250-OH Commission is "...to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United States and the impact of Ohioans on the nation's past, present, and future." — Ohio Revised Code (149.309). More information can be found at America250-Ohio.org.



You're Invited!

County Name
Heritage Tree Dedication

Date
Time

Location
Address

*America 250-Ohio's Heritage Trees program
is made possible by our sponsors*



Special thanks to America 250-Ohio's Heritage Trees partners
*Dawes Arboretum, Cox Arboretum MetroPark, Holden Forests & Gardens,
Keep Ohio Beautiful, Ohio Department of Natural Resources,
Rowe Arboretum & Secrest Arboretum*

Include brief description of Event.

More information here:





Heritage Trees: Planting History Public Dedication Event Checklist

Thank you for participating in America 250-Ohio's *Heritage Trees: Planting History* program! To help with the planning of your Tree dedication event, we have the following recommendations to ensure your event is a success:

- ✓ Dig the hole for the tree and plant the tree in advance of the event
- ✓ Determine who your event speakers will be and provide them with the talking points provided by America 250-Ohio
- ✓ Determine what the Tree planting ceremony will look like – will people place mulch, shovel dirt, have a ribbon cutting?
- ✓ What will people do at your event? Consider including fun programmatic elements with your remarks:
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Color Guard
 - Involve local students, girl scouts, boy scouts, etc.
 - Poetry recitation
 - Music
 - Pair event with Volunteer/Clean-up/service day
 - Invite guests to go on a guided nature walk after the Tree dedication
 - Other event ideas: <https://www.arboday.org/celebrate/ways-to-celebrate>
- ✓ Consider what items you need for a successful event:
 - Podium
 - Chairs
 - Stage/risers
 - Microphone/sound system
 - U.S., State of Ohio, and America 250-Ohio Community flags
 - Shovels for tree planting ceremony
 - Refreshments
- ✓ Invite community partners such as:
 - Your local elected officials
 - Local America 250 Committees
 - Your local arboretum or Soil and Water Conservation Partners
 - Your local historical society and other history partners
 - Urban Forest/Tree City/Parks & Rec staff
 - America 250-Ohio Commission – send invitation to heritagetrees@ohiohistory.org
- ✓ Invite your local media using the press release template provided by America 250-Ohio
- ✓ Invite your community members! Publicize your event on social media, your newsletter, etc.
- ✓ Communicate parking details and other key details in your event communications – rest room access, accessibility needs, etc.
- ✓ Develop a rain plan



Heritage Trees: Planting History Talking Points for Public Dedication

Please state the talking points in bold at your public dedication. Cenovus Energy, Ohio Liquor and The Lubrizol Foundation are the sponsors that have made this program possible, and we ask that you publicly recognize them for their support.

- **This oak tree is a legacy gift from the America 250-Ohio Commission as part of their Heritage Trees program in honor of the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026.**
- **All of Ohio's 88 counties will receive an oak tree in celebration of this important anniversary.**
- **[Insert County Name] has accepted this tree and will nurture and care for it for future generations to enjoy.**
- ***Heritage Trees: Planting History is made possible by Presenting Sponsor Cenovus [SIN-OH-VUS] Energy and Supporting Sponsors Ohio Liquor and The Lubrizol [LOO-BRIH-ZOHL] Foundation.***
- Consider sharing why/how you chose the location of the tree planting.
- Share that an oak tree was chosen by America 250-Ohio and their partners because they grow in many soil types, resist most tree diseases and many species are native to Ohio.
- Trees are living history and planting a tree is a way to honor Ohio's past, shape the present and establish our environmental future.
- This tree will live on for generations to come.
- Invite people to come back and visit the tree to see how it grows.
- Share other ways that your county and community will celebrate the nation's 250th birthday in 2026.

We invite all Ohioans to take part in Heritage Tree Plantings and share their experiences with us vis MemoryFox!



Just as trees take root and grow, our shared stories help preserve the rich history and traditions of Ohio. By planting a heritage tree, you are not only honoring the past but also shaping the future—leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come. When we come together to plant, reflect, and share, we strengthen our connection to the land, our communities, and our history. Your voice and participation make this movement stronger, so we encourage you to be a part of this meaningful journey and share your story with us!

How to Share Your Story on MemoryFox:

- "It's simple, quick, and a meaningful way to contribute! Just follow these five easy steps:"
 1. **Scan the QR Code** – You'll find it displayed around the event. Just open your phone's camera and scan to get started.
 2. **Input Your Info & Consent** – We respect your privacy and want to ensure you're comfortable with sharing.
 3. **Choose a Call-To-Action (CTA)** – Select a prompt that resonates with you—maybe why this tree planting is meaningful or what Ohio's history means to you.
 4. **Capture Your Story** – You can share a short video, a photo, or a written reflection.
 5. **Submit Your Story** – And just like that, you've contributed to history!

Call to Action:

- "So before you leave today, take a moment to scan, reflect, and share. Your voice is part of Ohio's history, and we want it to be heard as we look toward America's 250th anniversary!"
- "Thank you for being here, for planting roots—both literally and figuratively—and for making history with us!"



Share Your Story with Us

It's simple, quick, and a meaningful way to contribute! Just open your phone's camera and **Scan the QR Code Below**



OR

Follow the URL Link Below:

<http://america250-ohio.memfox.io/heritagetrees>



HOLDEN
FORESTS &
GARDENS

Tree Care Toolkit

**BEST PRACTICES FOR SELECTION, PLACEMENT,
PLANTING, PROTECTION, MAINTENANCE AND MORE.**



Heritage Trees and America 250-Ohio

On behalf of the America 250-Ohio Commission, thank you for participating in the Heritage Trees program! The America 250-Ohio Commission is dedicated to planting a white oak tree in every county to honor Ohio's role in the nation's founding and to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. These trees serve as living monuments, symbolizing the strength and resilience of our shared history. By planting these heritage trees in meaningful locations, such as county seats and Tree City USA communities, Ohioans are actively preserving their local heritage while contributing to environmental sustainability. This has been made possible by our program sponsor Cenovus Energy.

We are pleased to share with you this Tree Care Toolkit from Holden Arboretum in Kirtland, Ohio. Their toolkit for planting your white oak and ongoing maintenance will give arboretum-approved guidelines on how to take care of your historic tree for generations to enjoy.

Beyond their historical significance, these trees will provide lasting environmental and community benefits. White oaks are known for their ecological value, supporting diverse wildlife and improving air and water quality. As they grow, these trees will stand as a testament to Ohio's commitment to conservation and remembrance. The Heritage Trees program also fosters public engagement by encouraging communities to reflect on their historical roots and their role in shaping the nation's future. Through these efforts, America 250-Ohio is ensuring that the semiquincentennial celebration leaves a meaningful and lasting impact for generations to come.

About America 250-Ohio

The America 250-Ohio Commission, established by Governor Mike DeWine on March 1, 2022, is responsible for leading Ohio's commemoration of the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026. Comprised of 29 members, the Commission is dedicated to highlighting Ohio's historical contributions through programs, educational initiatives, and community engagement. With a focus on inclusion, we are working to ensure that all 88 counties play a role in celebrating Ohio's rich heritage. Our efforts encompass historic preservation, public events, and projects like

the Heritage Trees initiative that create a lasting legacy beyond the anniversary year.

By fostering partnerships with local governments, historical societies, and community organizations, we are amplifying the voices of Ohioans in this nationwide celebration. Our mission is to not only reflect on the past but also to inspire future generations to appreciate and protect Ohio's cultural and natural resources. Through programs like Heritage Trees and other forthcoming initiatives, America 250-Ohio is strengthening civic pride and reinforcing the state's essential place in American history. As 2026 approaches, our work will continue to bring people together, ensuring that Ohio's contributions are honored and remembered for years to come.

About MemoryFox

To enrich these initiatives, America 250-Ohio is partnering with MemoryFox, a storytelling platform designed to ethically and efficiently collect, organize, and share community narratives. By utilizing MemoryFox, America 250-Ohio aims to capture the unique stories surrounding each tree planting event and community celebration. Participants can share their personal experiences, historical insights, and reflections on the significance of the national anniversary. These collected stories will be curated into a comprehensive digital archive, showcasing the rich tapestry of Ohio's heritage. This approach not only preserves individual memories but also fosters a deeper connection among communities, enhancing the overall impact of the America 250-Ohio initiatives.

Share your story here at this link or by scanning the QR Code: <http://america250-ohio.memfox.io/heritagetrees>



Stay informed at our website:
<https://america250-ohio.org/>



Benefits of Trees

Why do we care so much about trees? Because trees are the only infrastructure elements that increase in value over time! Think about it. It is obvious that healthy trees beautify our urban environment, but did you know they also provide numerous environmental, economic, social and health benefits that make our communities more livable? Trees are also on the front lines of our changing climate and naturally mitigate the effects. Invest in planting trees and properly care for them so they prosper for decades. Trees really do pay us back!



The following are just some of the many benefits healthy trees provide.

Environmental Benefits

- Absorb carbon dioxide
- Cool pavement
- Release oxygen
- Store carbon
- Intercept & clean rainwater
- Trap particulate matter
- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Moderate stream temperatures
- Prevent soil erosion
- Provide wildlife habitat

Economic Benefits

- Increase property values
- Increase business traffic
- Reduce energy consumption
- Buffer noise
- Calm traffic
- Increase pavement longevity
- Create green jobs

Social & Public Health Benefits

- Reduce UV-B exposure
- Improve respiratory health
- Provide green exercise
- Improve mental health
- Decrease stress
- Provide places to gather
- Provide Inspiration





Proper Tree Planting

Recent research and information on plant biology has given us new insights on how to improve the survival rate of newly planted trees and shrubs. Appropriate site selection, planting hole preparation and most importantly, planting depth are factors that will help ensure that your trees and shrubs are healthy, vigorous and add beauty to your landscape for many years.

Timing

When is the best time of year to plant trees in Northeast Ohio? **Spring** and **Fall** are the best times for planting new trees (Late March through early-June and late October to mid-December)

Deciduous trees (A)

- Plant when the tree is dormant - either before the tree breaks bud in the spring or just after it loses its leaves in the fall
- Another good rule is to plant at least four to six weeks before either the extreme conditions of winter or summer are expected to arrive

Evergreen trees (B)

- Evergreen trees transplant well in spring and fall

Spring Planting Benefits

It's a popular time to get out in the yard and there is often better selection of trees available.

Magnolia, Willow, Dogwood and Birch are recommended for spring planting as they require more time to establish. Fruit trees are best planted in spring as well to avoid damaging their tender shoots.

Fall Planting Benefits

The leaves are off and there is less chance of sun damage to leaves or drought damaging roots. Since trees focus on growing new roots in fall, planting new trees in the fall helps develop denser, stronger roots.

Not recommended - Planting in Summer

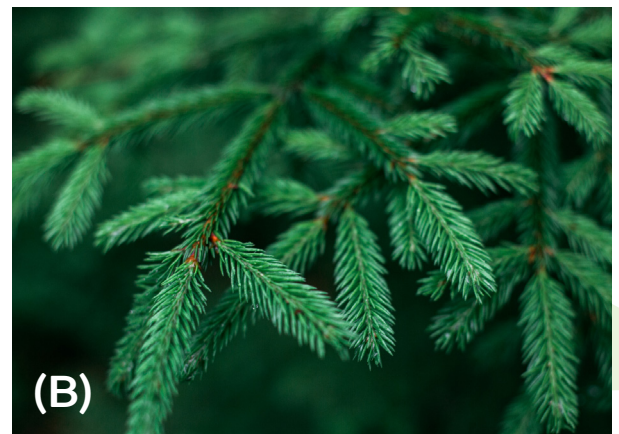
Planting in summer's heat is not recommended as it creates conditions too dry and stressful for the tree. If you must plant in the summer, plant a containerized tree. You **MUST** water it frequently!



Bare root tree at the nursery.



(A)



(B)

Tools and Materials for Planting

To facilitate easy planting, make sure you have the proper tools for the job!

Checklist:

- ✓ Gloves - to protect your hands
- ✓ Long Pointy Shovel - for digging and breaking up soil
- ✓ Soil Knife or 'Hori Hori' - for digging and cutting (one blade edge is serrated)
- ✓ Bypass Pruners - for pruning roots, limbs and cutting tags. One blade bypasses the other. Makes clean cuts.
- ✓ 5-gallon Bucket or Hose - for watering the tree
- ✓ Mesh Tree Guard - for protecting tree against deer, mechanized equipment, etc.
- ✓ Wooden Stakes - to keep your tree secure for its first year
- ✓ Tree Tie - wide, flexible material for securing tree to stake
- ✓ Small Sledgehammer - for pounding the wooden stakes into the ground
- ✓ Mulch - to protect tree, hold moisture, reduce weed competition, add nutrients and moderate soil temperature



Planting Step-by-Step

1. Select The Site

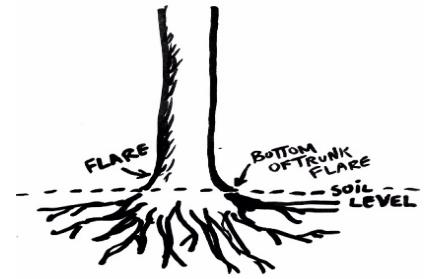
Evaluate the needs of the plant and the conditions of the site before you make a purchase and make sure they are compatible. Consider whether the site's exposure is in sun, part sun, or shade. Know the ultimate size of the tree – will it be too close to the house or power lines when mature? Is the tree's purpose to provide shade, fall color, screen an unsightly view, be a windbreak or serve some other function? Is the plant hardy to minus 10 to 20 degrees F. in NE Ohio's zone 5? Is the soil texture sand, loam, clay, well drained, dry, or frequently wet. Site incompatibility will result in the certain decline and premature death of the tree.

2. Call Before You Dig

At least 48 hours before planting, take a few minutes to call 800-362-2764 or 8-1-1, or visit e-dig to request the location of underground utilities (gas, electric and other facilities) near your digging site. This will keep you safe from personal injury, property damage, fines and utility disruption.

3. Prepare The Tree

One of the most common mistakes is planting too deeply, resulting in poor vigor and growth and also a major factor in the formation of stem girdling roots which in time can kill the plant. Locate the area at the base of the trunk where it flares out. This is the trunk flare zone where the roots meet the trunk. On balled and burlapped plants, the trunk flare is frequently one to several inches inside the rootball. Untie the twine and burlap and locate the trunk flare. Remove the excess soil above the flare zone. This will become the soil line. Measure the rootball height from trunk flare to the bottom of the rootball.



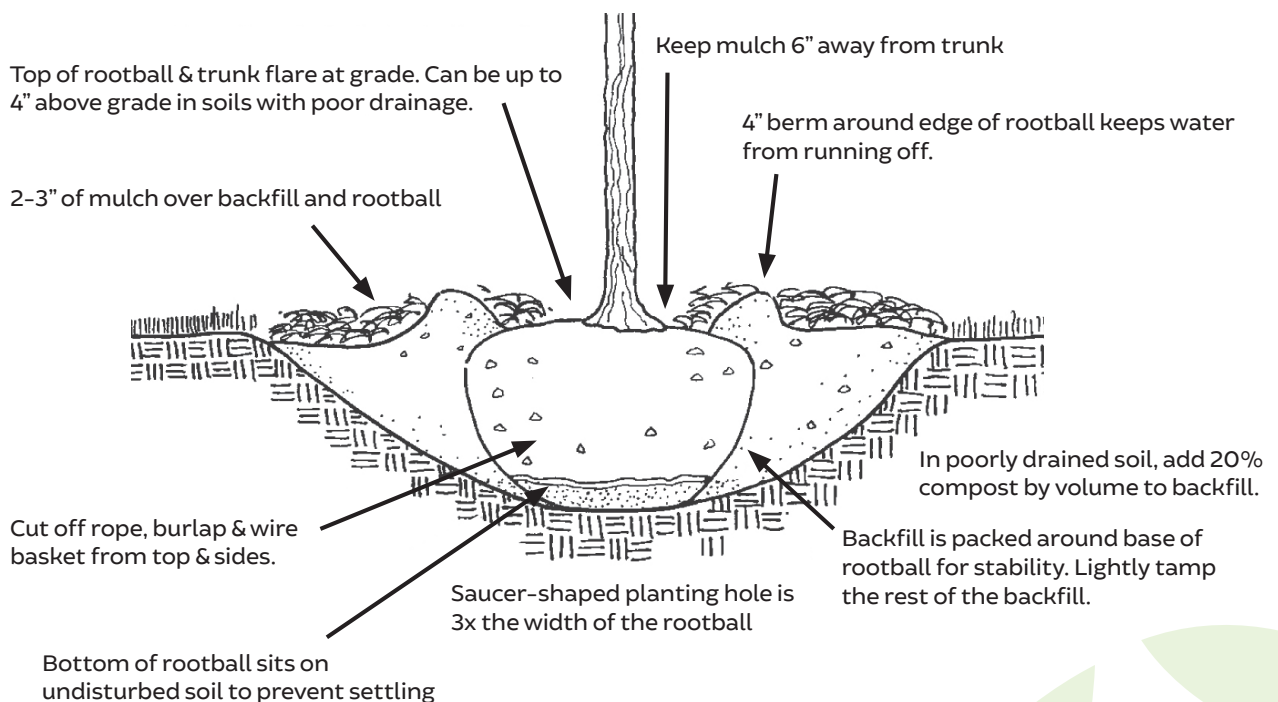
4. Dig The Hole

Dig a saucer-shaped hole 2 to 3 times the width of the rootball. Do not dig deeper than the measurement you made in step 2. Do not loosen the soil at the bottom of the hole. The rootball must rest -firmly on undisturbed soil so the tree doesn't settle.

5. Set The Plant

Balled and Burlapped (B&B) Nursery Stock

Lower the rootball into the hole, keeping the tree's soil line level with the top of the hole. Cut the wire cage and remove as much of it as possible. If it is left in place, the wires can girdle the roots. Cut and remove the burlap as far down as possible. Remove all tags, nails, and twine. Backfill with the original soil taken from the hole until the fill soil is level with the trunk flare and existing grade. Up to 20% organic matter (compost) by volume may be mixed with the soil used for backfilling. Firm the soil around the base of the rootball to stabilize it, then slightly tamp the rest of the backfill soil or just let it settle. Make a temporary soil "berm" 4 inches high, just outside of the rootball to create a watering basin.



Containerized Nursery Stock

Loosen and remove the container. If the roots are circling in the container, gently massage or tease them with your fingers to loosen them from the soil. Prune any difficult to loosen, matted roots with bypass pruners or vertically shave the outside root ball with a saw to loosen. Backfill and firm as directed for B&B plants.

Post Planting Care

6. Mulching

Remove the grass and mulch an 8 ft. diameter circle 2 to 3 inches deep. Keep mulch 6 inches away from the trunk to prevent fungi and rodent injury. Maintain a 3- inch layer of mulch from year to year and apply it after the soil has warmed in the spring.

7. Watering

Fill the "reservoir" made by the soil berm. Watering the rootball and backfill slowly. Use 20 gallons per tree within 8 hours of planting. Since a B&B plant may have had as much as 90% of its roots left at the nursery when dug, regular and sufficient watering the first two years until the plant is established is critical. Apply 10 to 15 gallons of water at a rate less than 3 gallons per minute once a week, May through November, unless more than 1 inch of rain falls during the week as measured on your property.

8. Undressing

Remove any tags, tape, twine or other materials from time of purchase that may still be attached to the branches or trunk.

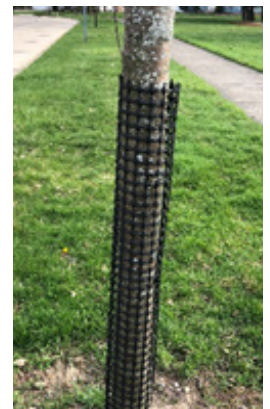
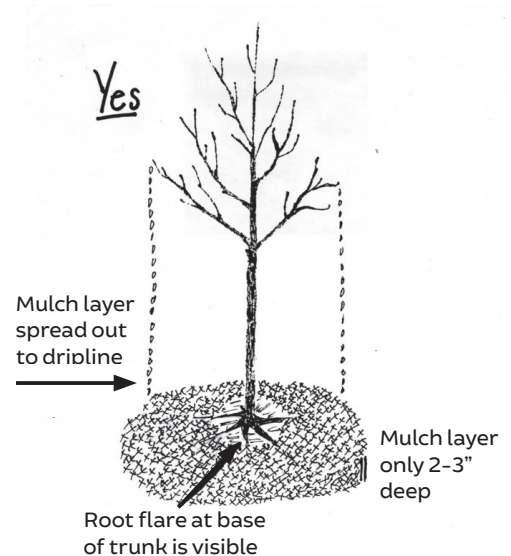
9. Protection

Young trees are often damaged by deer rubbing their antlers against the tender bark or string trimmers gouging the root flare. Protect the tender bark of young trees against mechanized equipment, deer and rodents with a commercial tree protector. These covers should be placed loosely around the trunk of the tree and checked periodically to ensure they are not cutting into the bark or harboring undesirable critters.

10. Staking

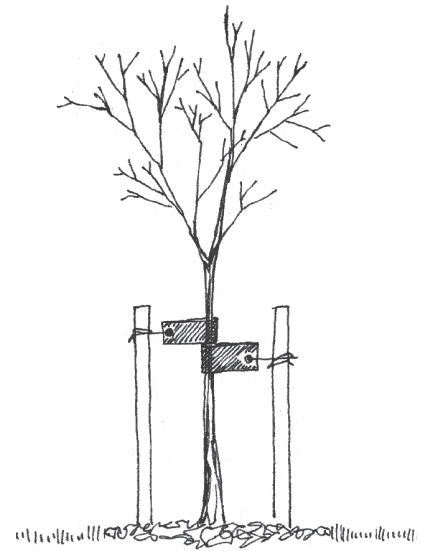
This is only necessary if the tree cannot support itself in the wind. Stake as low as possible on the tree to encourage flexibility and proper trunk flare development. To prevent trunk injury use flexible staking straps instead of rubber hose covered wire. All staking should be removed after one year.

Staking can have detrimental effects on the development of a tree. When compared to trees that have not been staked, staked trees have less trunk diameter growth, a smaller root system and are more subject to breaking or tipping after stakes are removed. In addition, staked trees may become injured or girdled from the staking materials. Almost every response to support staking prevents a tree from becoming strong. For the most part, the sooner a tree can stand alone, the sooner it will become strong. Yet, staking does play a valuable part, if done properly, in protecting young trees from equipment, animals, strong winds and vandalism.



Weak trunks are common on many container grown trees. They should be attached to the stake at the lowest level at which the trunk can be held and the top will return upright after being bent to the side. This location will allow the tree to sway, stimulating trunk diameter growth, while providing adequate support. The higher the support, the less the crown has flexibility to sway when taking the brunt of strong winds. When only one stake is used, there are usually several points of attachment; besides the direct effects of trunk immobility, other difficulties may occur:

1. The ties may girdle the trunk. Frequent inspection can limit this.
2. Greater stress will occur at the top ties during a wind if the trunk below is not able to flex in the opposite direction as the top is blown back and forth; the trunk is then more likely to break at the top tie or to be seriously deformed.
3. The stake may also shade the trunk, causing the xylem cells to elongate more on the shaded side so that the tree actually grows away from the stake. Two stakes can minimize the problems encountered in support staking; some arborists and landscape architects even recommend three stakes. Two support stakes with one flexible tie near the top of each will hold the tree upright, provide flexibility, and minimize trunk injury and deformation.

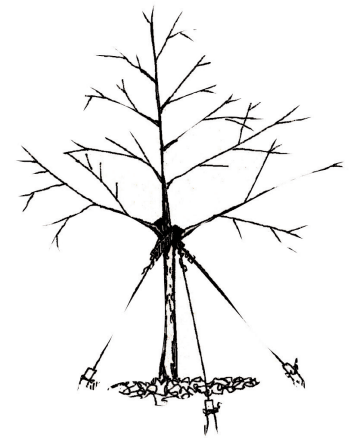


The two or three stakes suggested for proper tree staking usually provide enough anchorage for roots. Place one loop or figure eight tie between each stake and the tree trunk. Make sure that the bindings on the tree can flex without the tree rubbing against the stake. The ties must not be so tight or inflexible that they are likely to damage tender bark or girdle the expanding trunk. There should be enough slack so that the tree can move up to two inches in every direction. If the trunk can't move, it won't grow in girth and will remain weak.

Materials

Any material used should contact the trunk with a broad, smooth surface and have enough elasticity to minimize trunk abrasion and girdling. Secure the tree to the stakes with broad, soft straps. Common tie material includes elastic webbing, belting and polyethylene tape.

A number of patented ties and support devices are also available for staking. UV sensitive polyethylene fabric ties that only last a year will minimize the problem of girdling, although they may allow stake rubbing.



Guying

Trees greater than four inches in diameter are often supported with guy wires. Trees are generally guyed with three or four wires that are anchored in the ground with stakes. Guy wires should be passed through a section of hose to protect the tree or attached to the end of straps. The wires and hose or straps are passed around the tree at crotches and the wires are twisted to tie them off. The guy wires must not be tied tightly around the tree trunk as this could cause girdling. Any modification to reduce friction will minimize damage to the tree. Guy lines and stakes should be driven into the ground at the drip line and brightly marked to prevent tripping or mowing over them.

If support systems are left in place for more than two years the tree's ability to stand alone may be reduced, and the chances of girdling injury are increased. Staking and guying systems should be checked within one year to be sure they are not injuring the tree. You can usually remove staking by the end of the first growing season.



Who
to Call for
Expert Help



Call an Expert for Help

Trees are complex organisms and require specialized care and attention. Caring for trees is both an art and a science and you often get what you pay for with tree care services. A company that provides the least expensive quote may not be qualified to work on trees and may actually do more harm than good.

If you need advice about your tree's health or someone equipped to care for it, contact a professional arborist. There are two types of professional arborists: certified and consulting. Certified arborists are accredited through the [International Society of Arboriculture](#) (ISA) and generally work for businesses, government or organizations that offer a variety of tree care services, such as pruning, planting, pest & disease management, fertilization, etc. Consulting arborists are often certified arborists with a wide range of credentials from organizations like ISA and the [American Society of Consulting Arborists](#) (ASCA) Consulting Academy. Consulting arborists offer specialized services such as detailed reports to property owners and clients regarding risk assessments, value appraisals and detailed tree care reports. Consulting arborists can also be expert witnesses in legal issues involving trees. Professional tree care companies have certified arborists on staff and are accredited by the [Tree Care Industry Association](#) (TCIA). Tree work can be very hazardous and accredited companies carry the proper liability and worker's compensation insurance, ensuring that employees are sufficiently protected.

These certifications and affiliations ensure the arborists stay up to date on the latest and greatest tree care & safety education and standards, adhere to industry standards for tree care practices, and comply with OSHA regulations. Ask for ISA or TCIA credentials and look for the logos below when selecting someone to care for your trees.

Certified arborists and professional consulting arborists offer many services for trees including:

- Consultation & Diagnosis
- Appraisal
- Inspection
- Planting & Transplanting
- Pruning
- Removal
- Fertilization
- Soil Treatments
- Storm Damage Cleanup
- Construction Protection & Monitoring
- Risk Assessment
- Pest & Disease Treatment
- Cabling & Bracing
- Lightning Protection
- Inventorying

Click [here](#) to find a Certified Arborist in your area

Click [here](#) to find a Consulting Arborist in your area





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