

**North Dakota Forest Service  
Community Forestry  
Recommended Three Year Maintenance Plan for Tree Planting Project  
(July 2001)**

**FIRST YEAR**

**Pre-planting:**

- Determine area of planting space; refer to your community's Tree Ordinance.
- Determine soil type; take soil test/sample of planting area (pH, mineral content, etc.)
- Locate underground and above utility lines (One call)
- Determine size and type of tree for planting site (B&B, Container, bare-root, small growing vs. large growing)
- Consider the future maintenance needs of the plant material before planting (water accessibility, mulching, etc.)

**Planting Day:**

- Keep roots moist; **do not** allow the roots to dry out.
- Remove turf from planting area.
- Dig planting hole wide and shallow. The hole should be 2-3 times wider in all directions than the root spread.
- Prune only dead or broken branches.
- Remove all twine or rope from trunk and branches.
- Remove planting container and burlap (any material that would constrict growth of roots; wire, plastic, wooden basket)
- Make sure that root flare is at soil level. (Rule of thumb first root closest to soil should be an inch below soil surface).
- Do not use amendments in the planting hole.
- Water tree at planting to remove air pockets. After backfilling gently firm soil, do not pack soil. Heavy packing will remove air space in soil.
- Do not mound soil against trunk of tree.
- Mulch over entire rooting area with 2-4" of mulch (wood chips, shredded bark, etc.) Keep mulch 2-4" from trunk of tree since this could create a favorable environment for fungi.
- Staking is not necessary and can even be detrimental for most young trees. (Exceptions: an extremely windy site, a tree with an unusually small root system, an unusually large canopy relative to a tree's root system, a tree whose trunk is seriously bowed, or to protect trees in high traffic areas where vandalism is feared).
- Fertilizer is not recommended for newly planted trees. (Consider time-released fertilizer, if there is a need to fertilize).

### **After Planting:**

- Water tree during dry periods. (Rule of thumb, water every 7-10 days during dry periods). Continue watering right up till the ground freezes.
- Inspect trees for disease or insect problems.
- Monitor health and vigor of trees.
- In fall wrap thin barked trees with tree wrap (e.g., lindens, mountain ash, silver maples)

### **SECOND YEAR**

- Continue to monitor trees health and vigor. Inspect for disease and insect problems. Inspect evergreen trees for winter injury and fruit trees for rodent damage.
- Remove tree wrap from thin bark trees in spring.
- Remove stakes from tree planted previous year.
- Add more mulch if needed.
- Begin corrective pruning trees one year after trees are planted (general rule of thumb is to remove no more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the foliage at one time).
- Continue watering trees when needed.
- If trees have died in first year notify nursery that planted trees. They should guarantee trees for at least one year. After guarantee period city or responsible entity for the care of trees should replace dead trees.
- In the fall continue to water trees. Wrap thin bark trees with tree wrap.

### **THIRD YEAR**

- Continue to monitor trees health and vigor. Inspect for disease and insect problems. Inspect evergreen trees for winter injury and fruit trees for rodent damage.
- Remove tree wrap from thin bark trees in spring.
- Add more mulch if needed.
- Replace dead trees as needed.
- Continue watering trees when needed. (Deep watering) Do not over water.
- Avoid tree injury, such as mechanical or herbicide injury.
- Avoid trenching, soil compaction, or depositing de-icing salts around trees.
- If needed a fertilizing schedule may begin during third or fourth year.

### **REFERENCES:**

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