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"Our Seeds Succeed"

Handling Bare Root

The arrival of warmer temperatures and melting snow brings the desire to rush outside and get planting! Early spring is the best time to find bare root trees - both fruit trees and shade trees. So what does bare root mean? A bare root tree or shrub is a plant that is still dormant, that has no pot and no soil around its roots. You may be wondering why anyone would want to buy such a plant. There are many advantages to buying and planting bare root material. 1) The plant is dormant, so it will experience less transplant shock if treated correctly. 2) Often you can find a better selection of plants because nurseries frequently offer more varieties in bare root than they do in already established plants. 3) Price. If you need a lot of plants, but have a hard time spending money on trees, now is the time to buy. Generally plants are 30-50% off their regular price.

Planting bare root is not hard, but there are certain requirements that you must follow in planting them. Follow these simple steps, you will have success!!

#1 Have your hole ready before you buy your tree and bring it home. Dig the hole at least 3 feet wide and 18-24" deep. If you can't plant the tree right away because of weather-store the tree in a cool place-and keep those roots WET with mulch, wet burlap, or heel it in.

#2 The number one cause of failure when planting bare root trees is that the delicate feeder roots dry out. You cannot let the roots or tops dry out. AS SOON AS YOU GET HOME- take the tree out of the bag and hose down the roots AND the tops.

#3 Prune the tops. Prune off any broken or damaged branches, crisscrossing branches, lower branches and take off up to 1/3 of the length of the remaining branches. This will help to take stress off the trees roots, and help them to bud more evenly. Only prune roots if they are broken or diseased looking. Healthy roots will look light brown and feel firm.

#4 Plant the tree so that the graft (the large knobby part found right between the trunk and the roots), is at least 1" above the final soil line. If this graft is placed below the soil line the trunk can rot, or even root and you'll lose the characteristics of the rootstock. Characteristics such as dwarfing, insect resistance, and drought tolerance. You can see trees in large orchards that have been planted too deeply, because they will be much taller than the other trees. So make sure to keep that graft above ground!

#5 Place the tree in the hole. Make sure the roots do not "j hook", or turn up on the ends. The roots should be planted like you see them, at angles pointing down. Sprinkle roots directly with Myke Tree and Shrub transplanter. Myke is a natural fungus that has a symbiotic relationship with your tree and shrubs roots. The Myke offers your tree more water and nutrients as it grows through the soil.

#6 Fill back in with soil. If your soil is very heavy, amend the soil with equal parts Redwood Soil Conditioner and your existing soil. Make sure to get the soil in between the roots leaving no air pockets. Build up the soil in a ring around the trunk to make a nice shallow pool for water to soak in slowly.

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#7 WATER!!! We often get asked exactly how often you must water your trees after you plant. Watering is something that you must learn in your own situation. The best way to tell is to actually poke your finger through the soil and see if it is cool and damp. Generally once a week all season for the first year will do. And you cannot rely on sprinklers for your lawn to do the trick. It must be a DEEP watering so that it can get all the way down to your tree's roots. The first watering should be done with Fertilome Root Stimulator to stimulate new root growth, and again a week later.

If you follow these few simple steps to planting your bare root trees, shrubs and berries-you're sure to have success!