



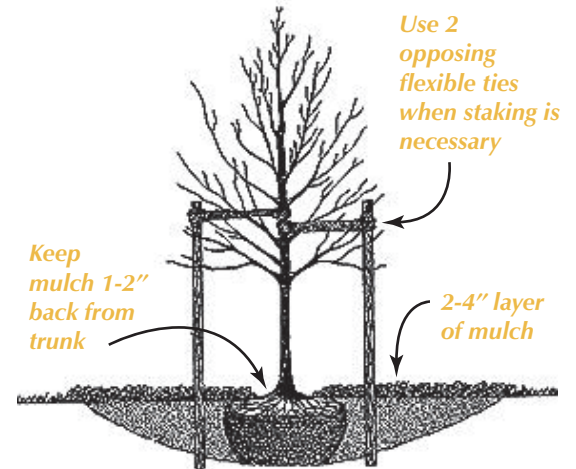
After planting a tree, there are other steps that can be taken to ensure its survival. Seedlings or whips should be mulched in order to reduce competition from other vegetation. In addition, larger trees should be staked.

Staking

- Trees which are taller and subject to excess movement should be staked.
- Use two stakes (wooden posts or steel posts); place the stakes parallel with the prevailing wind.
- Drive the stakes into the original grade, not into the backfill of the hole.
- Use wire or twine to attach the tree to the stake, and a piece of rubber garden hose can be wrapped around the wire at the trunk to prevent trunk damage.
- Leave the ties slightly loose to allow natural movement in the tree.
- Check the stakes regularly to insure that they are functioning and that they are not conflicting with the trees growth – remove them when they are no longer required.

Mulching

- Mulch is organic matter applied to the area at the base of the tree. It acts as a blanket to hold moisture, protect against harsh soil temperatures, both hot and cold, and reduces competition from grass and weeds.
- Some good choices are leaf litter, pine straw, shredded bark, peat moss, or wood chips.
- A two to four inch layer is ideal; more than four inches may cause a problem with gas exchange.
- When placing mulch, care should be taken so that the actual trunk of the tree is not covered; this may cause decay of the living bark at the base of the tree.
- A mulch-free area, one to two inches wide at the base of the tree, is sufficient to avoid moist bark conditions and prevent decay.



Do not mound mulch up against the trunk of the tree.



Instead, spread a circle of mulch around the tree and brush mulch away from the base of the tree.

