

# FORESTRY FACT SHEET



## Tree Care Tips

### Site preparation

Preparing the site before planting will greatly improve the growing conditions for your newly planted trees and will make follow up maintenance much easier. **Below are a few site preparation tips:**

- Remove debris like old fallen fencing, stumps, rocks and wood debris where possible.
- Remove species that will compete with your trees such as invasive species and unwanted grass, vines and weeds. The use of herbicide may be required for invasive species like common buckthorn, Phragmites and reed canary grass.
- Consider sowing a Dutch white clover (8-12lbs/acre) in the fall or in early March prior to tree planting. The clover covers quickly, crowds out weeds, prevents soil erosion and gets thicker every year with occasional mowing.

### Watering

Watering newly planted trees is crucial to survival. Infrequent heavy watering is preferred to a regular light watering. **A slow, deep watering once or twice per week** (in the absence of rain) encourages the development of deep roots. Frequent, light watering causes the roots to stay near the surface making them vulnerable to drought and soil compaction!

### Mulching

Mulch is very **beneficial for your trees**. It holds onto moisture, reduces weed competition, decreases the impacts of soil compaction and creates a barrier around trees.

- Place a large ring of mulch around the base of the tree roughly 4" deep and as wide as possible. The more mulch the better!
- Don't allow mulch to sit against the tree stem as this can cause decay—arrange mulch in a donut shape around the stem of the tree.

### Fertilizer

For most sites fertilizer is not necessary, however if your soil lacks nutrients you can consider applying a fertilizer. Look for blend of the key macronutrients N-P-K (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) in a slow release granular formula. **However be cautious** as fertilizing too much or using a poorly suited fertilizer can actually harm your trees.

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### Mowing/grass removal

Mowing tall grass around young trees can improve growing conditions by increasing the amount of light and moisture that reaches the trees while also reducing habitat for rodents.

- Be very cautious when mowing around young trees, it is easy to damage or even completely mow over seedlings and small trees growing in heavy grass.
- Mowers and trimmers can damage even mature trees, so always leave a gap between machinery and trees.
- It's a good practice to flag or stake newly planted trees to help equipment operator's see tree locations.

### Rodent guards

Guards protect young trees from rodents that eat the bark of young trees which in severe cases can kill trees. Rodent guards are needed most in late fall and into the winter when other food sources are scarce.

### Pruning dos & don'ts

- **DO** remove dead, dying, damaged, diseased, or insect infested branches.
- **DO** clean/sanitize your tools between trees to stop the spread of diseases.
- **DON'T** prune more than 1/3 of the live crown at one time.
- **DON'T** make a flush cut! Avoid cutting into the branch collar, and angle your cut so the smallest surface area possible will be exposed.

