

# TREE PLANTING GUIDE

## SOUTH CAROLINA



The best time to plant trees in South Carolina is between October and April.

A recommended tree list is available on the South Carolina Forestry Commission's website via this link or QR code:

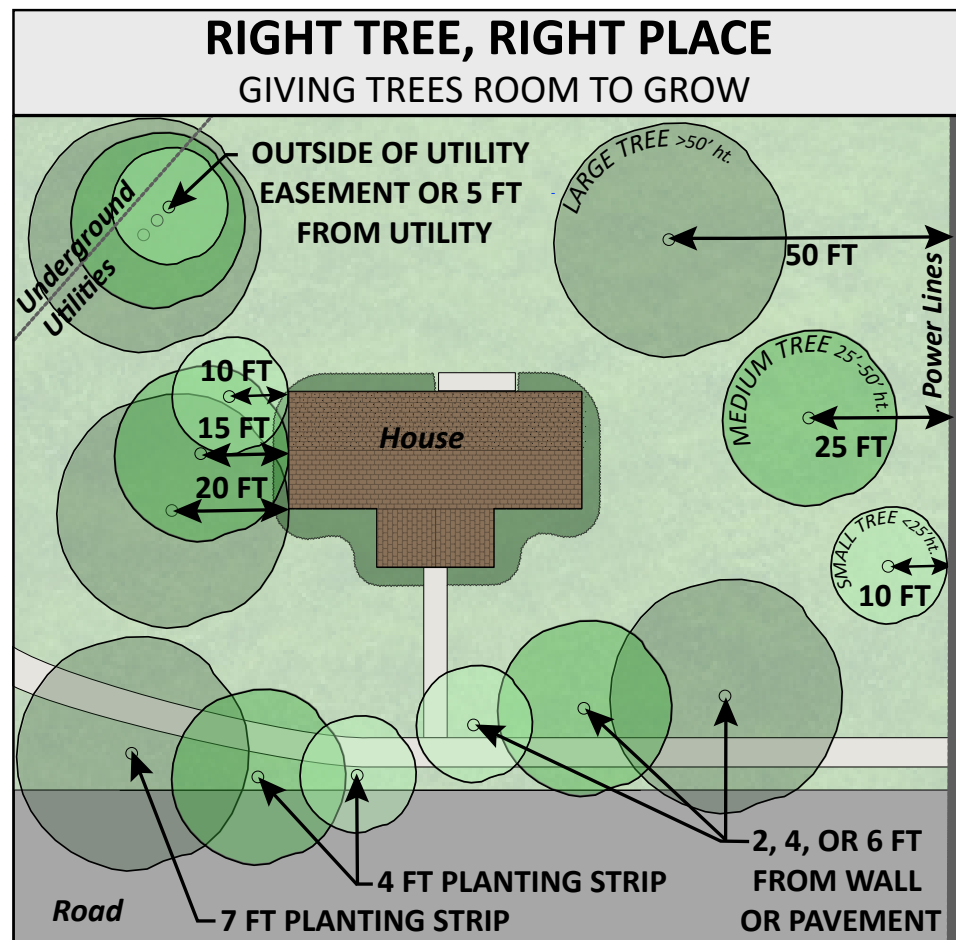
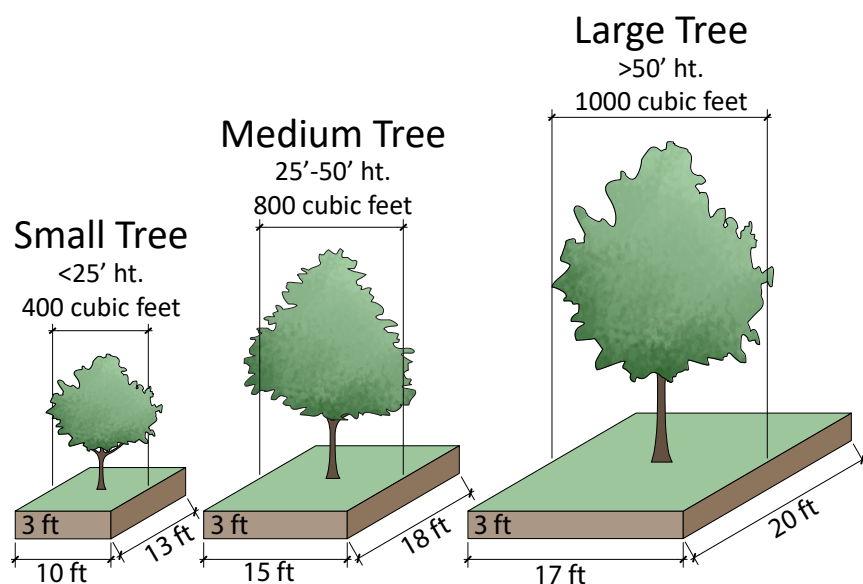
[www.scfc.gov/management/urban-forestry/urban-tree-care-resources/](http://www.scfc.gov/management/urban-forestry/urban-tree-care-resources/)



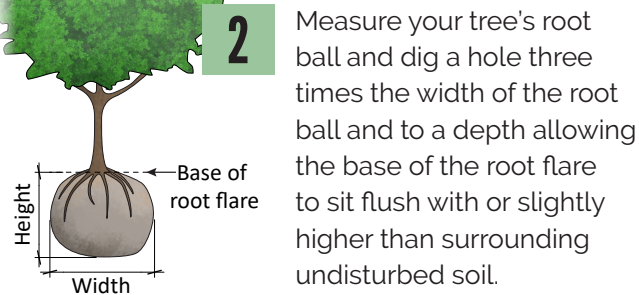
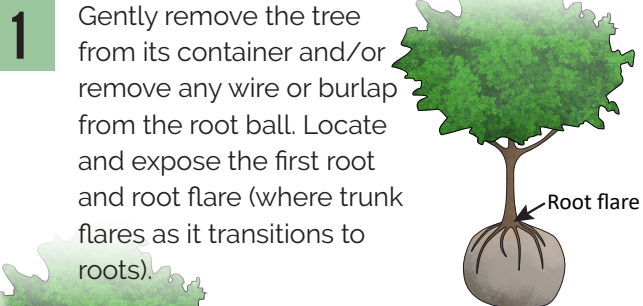
## LOCATING YOUR TREE

It is important to locate your tree in the right place. Account for the soil volume your tree will need to grow and consider surroundings such as power lines, buildings, sidewalks, roads, driveways, walls, and underground utilities. Call 811 to locate underground utilities before digging.

## SOIL VOLUME FOR TREES



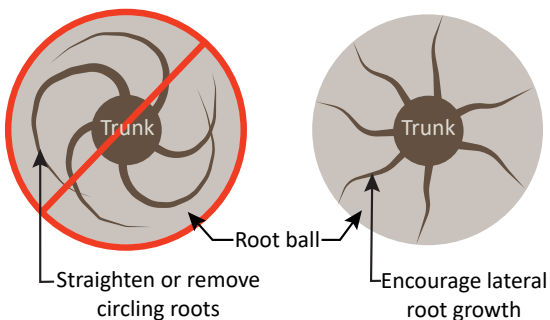
# PLANTING YOUR TREE



**1** Gently remove the tree from its container and/or remove any wire or burlap from the root ball. Locate and expose the first root and root flare (where trunk flares as it transitions to roots).

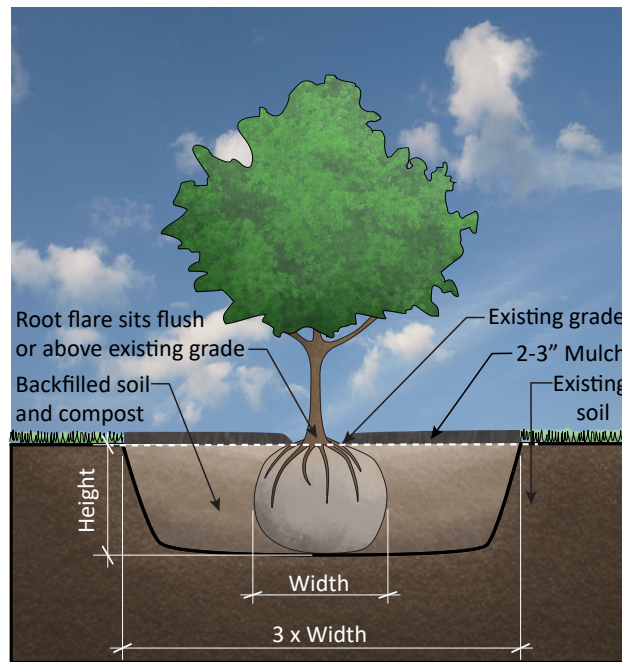
**2** Measure your tree's root ball and dig a hole three times the width of the root ball and to a depth allowing the base of the root flare to sit flush with or slightly higher than surrounding undisturbed soil.

## TOP VIEW OF TRUNK AND ROOT BALL



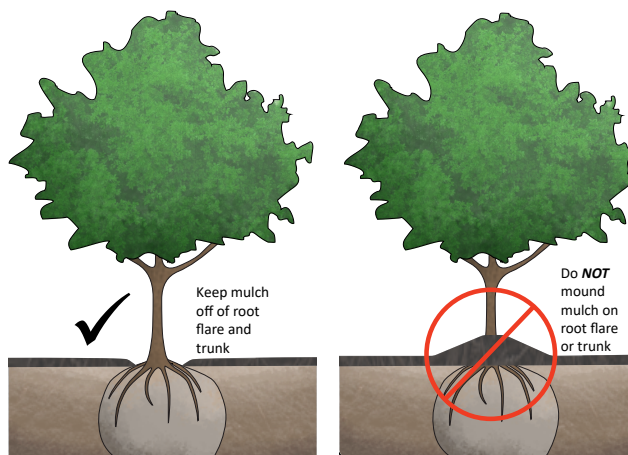
**3** Correct or remove circling or girdling roots from the root ball. Tease out flexible roots to encourage lateral growth. Woody circling roots that will not straighten should be cut with pruners.

**4** Place the tree/root ball in the center of the hole and add or remove soil below it until the base of the root flare is flush or an inch or two above the existing soil. Position the tree in an upright position and determine best rotation. View tree from different angles to assure it is straight and positioned properly.



**5** Backfill the hole with soil removed adding 2-3 inches of compost on top. Tamp down the soil.

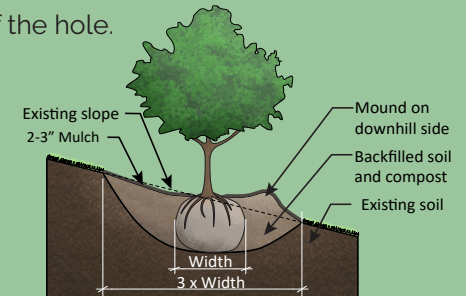
**6** Add 2-3 inches of mulch out to the tree's dripline. Take care to keep the root flare exposed.



**7** Water your tree with 2 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter. Do not saturate the soil.

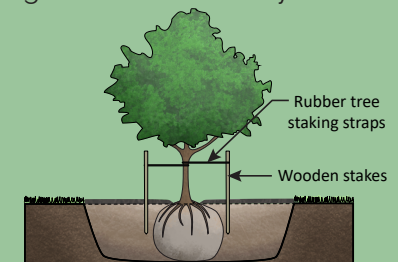
# PLANTING ON A HILL

To plant your tree on a hill: dig a hole with a flat bottom so the tree will stand upright, position the root ball so the root flare is above the existing line of the hill, and mound backfill soil on the downslope side of the hole.



## STAKING

Trees develop stronger trunks and root systems if they are not staked. However, in windy locations, staking may be required for the first year. Use wooden stakes about 1.5' from the trunk or just beyond the root ball and rubber tree staking straps with enough slack for tree sway.



## WATERING

Keep your tree consistently watered for the first year. The soil should be moist, not soggy. During the growing season and dry times water every week. Consider a tree watering bag or donut to deliver water to the tree roots more effectively.

*This brochure was created by the Green Infrastructure Center in partnership with the SCFC. To learn more about the GIC visit: [www.gicinc.org](http://www.gicinc.org)*

