

# OSU Extension Bare Root Guide

Provided courtesy of the Polk SWCD

Trees and shrubs play an important role in maintaining a healthy environment. As a gardener, bare root native plants are an economical way for you to contribute to ecosystem and watershed health.

## Handle bare root plants with care

Bare root plants need to be kept cool and moist and should be planted within a day or two of obtaining them. It is important to have a plan in mind and the site prepared before heading out into the field.

When you're getting ready to plant, dip the roots into water to re-wet them, then place them into an empty bucket to shelter them. Don't place water in the bucket, or you'll drown the roots. Prepare just enough plants for about 1 hour's worth of work.

## Planting techniques - a big hole isn't needed

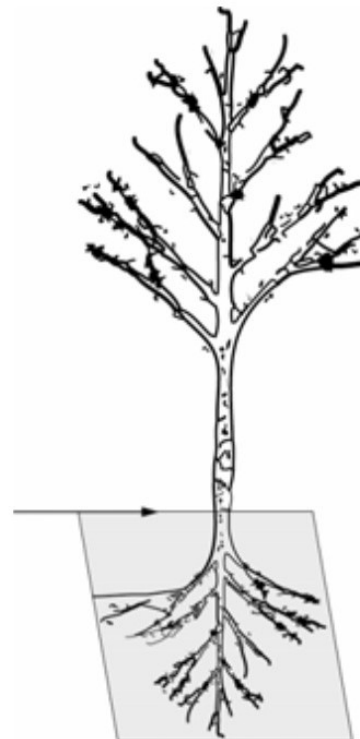
Loosen up the soil to break it up. Rather than a big hole, what you need is an opening that's just large enough to accommodate the roots in a somewhat natural position.

Place the seedling into the ground so that the roots hang down and the plant is at the same level as it was at from the nursery.

Use the shovel to push soil back into the hole around the roots. Give a little press to help anchor the plant into place.

## How long can you wait to plant bare root trees?

4-6 Weeks. Bare root plants are sold in spring and must be planted as soon as possible after purchase. Proper planting is critical to their survival and long-term success. Note that bare root plants are slow to "wake up." Expect to wait four to six weeks after planting until you see signs of growth.



## Do I need to soak bare root plants before planting?

Do not cut healthy roots shorter. Place the root portion of the plant in water and let it soak before you plant - several hours for woody plants; 10-20 minutes for perennials. This good soaking will help the plant get a better start