



# ***Tree Planting***

*A step by step guide*

## **Why should we plant trees?**

They are attractive in their own right and provide oxygen and shade, screen unsightly buildings, filter noise and dirt and provide a haven for wildlife. Trees are very beneficial and planting one now should provide pleasure for generations to come.

## **Where to plant**

Almost any garden (except the very small) can accommodate a tree. However, you need to ensure that you pick the site carefully so that the tree does not cause undue problems to you or your neighbours as it grows – for example, by casting excessive shade to the house or garden. Pick a tree of appropriate ultimate size with care. Trees classed as small are bigger than you think. Don't plant on top of, or too near, pipes or cables.

## **When to plant**

Most trees should be planted in the dormant season. November through to February is ideal but avoid times when the ground is frozen or waterlogged. If you buy a tree grown in a container you can plant it at any time but the height of summer is best avoided. Once you've bought your tree, plant it as soon as possible, but if you have to delay, cover the roots with soil or straw to prevent them drying out.

## **Digging**

Dig a hole wide and deep enough to accommodate your tree's roots without bending or breaking them. Dig it a couple of inches wider to allow for initial growth. Keep trying the tree for size until the hole is big enough. Fork over the bottom of the pit and roughen up the sides. This allows the roots to penetrate into the surrounding soil more easily.

## **Staking**

The tree only needs supporting so that it remains steady at the base. This prevents the roots moving when the tree sways in the wind and allows them to establish a firm grip. The tree can then support itself.

## **Planting**

Plant the tree at the right depth – look for the nursery mark at the base of the stem. This indicates the soil level when the tree was in the nursery. Back fill the hole until the tree can stand in the hole at the right depth. Examine the tree's roots and carefully prune any broken or damaged ones with secateurs. Stand the tree in the hole and cover the roots with the finest soil you dug out. Gently shake the tree up and down to sift the soil into the spaces between the roots. Add more soil and gently firm it down with the sole of your foot (don't use your heel, this compresses it too much). Repeat until the hole is full and finally work the surface into a fine tilth.

## ***A correctly planted tree***

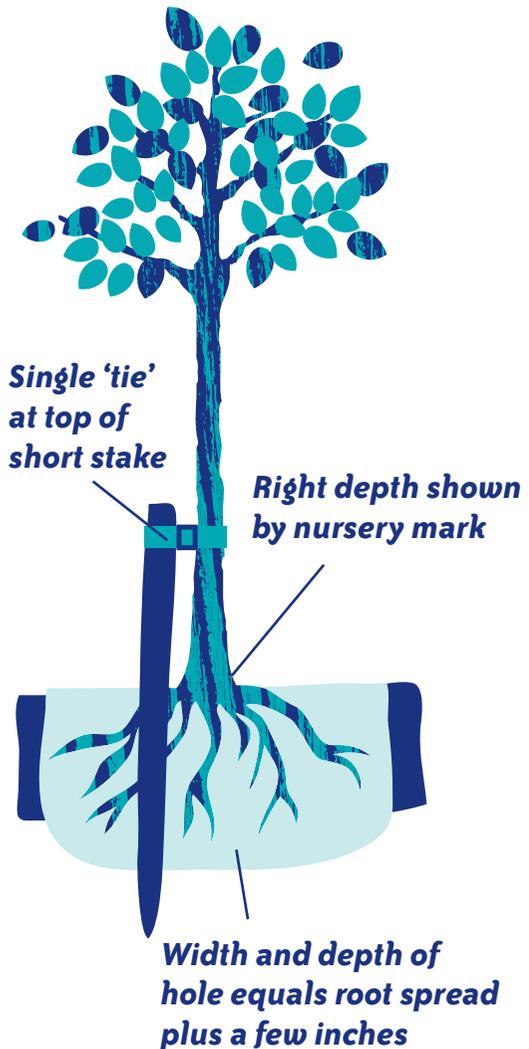
Buy a stout, straight stake from wherever you bought your tree. Temporarily put the tree in the hole and carefully put the stake through the least restricted route through the roots. Orient the tree and stake so that the stake is on the 'up-wind' side of the tree in relation to the prevailing wind. The tree and stake should both be upright and about 1.5 inches apart. Mark the spot for the stake, put the tree aside and drive the stake in firmly. The top of the stake only needs to be about 3ft in height for a tree about 8ft tall – use the same ratio for trees of other sizes.

## ***Securing***

You should only need one tie with a short stake. Occasionally a second is needed if there is risk of the stem chafing against the stake. Buy a manufactured tie and spacer from wherever you bought your tree. Home-made ones are rarely adequate. It should now be easy to secure the tree to the stake, using the spacer to prevent chafing against the stake (if not, please read 'Staking'). The tie only needs to be tight enough to hold the tree firmly and prevent movement at the base – it shouldn't constrict stem growth. The tie should be at the top of the stake.

## ***Finally***

- Give the tree a good watering, and remember to:
- Water the tree regularly
- Keep the base free from weeds
- Check the tie and adjust if necessary
- Remove the stake after a couple of years
- Sit back and watch it grow.



## A selection of trees for gardens

### Snowy Mespil – *Amelanchier laevis*

A small tree bearing racemes of star shaped flowers in spring. Autumn colours vary from scarlet to deep red.

### Birches – *Betula* species

If you are a lover of Birch, ask your supplier about:

**B. Pendula** – Silver Birch, the familiar ‘Lady of the Woods’.

**B. Jacquemontii** – White-barked Himalayan Birch, brilliant white stem.

**B. Pendula ‘Dalecarlica’** – Swedish Birch, delicately cut leaves.

**B. Pendula ‘Tristis’** – Tall and graceful variety.

### Thorn – *Crataegus* species

‘May’ trees can make an excellent medium sized tree with flowers, berries and often good autumn colour. Try:

**C. Monogyna** – The common May tree.

**C. Monogyna ‘Stricta’** – A small, compact and erect form of the May.

**C. Paul’s Scarlet** – Beautiful deep coloured double flowers.

**C. Prunifolia** – Bright red berries and fiery autumn colour but very thorny.

### Flowering Crab Apples – *Malus* species

These require full sun and good drainage to be seen at their best, but flowers and fruit are attractive. Use the fruit for Crab Apple Jelly or Wine. Consider:

**‘John Downie’, ‘Golden Hornet’, ‘Floribunda’, ‘Profusion’.**

### Flowering Cherries – *Prunus* species

There is a variety of cherry suitable for a garden of every size. For a large garden try the native species **P. Avium** or **P. Padus**. For a smaller garden try **P. Pandora**, **P. Hillieri Spire** or **P. Shimidsu**. For a very small garden either **P. Yedoensis ‘Ivensii’** (weeping) or **P.**

**Amanagawa** (upright) are worth a try.

### Snake-Bark Maples – *Acer* species

Most common maples are too large for ordinary gardens but the snake-bark maples are worth considering for their striped stems and autumn colour. **Acer Capillipes**, **Acer Davidii** and **Acer Hersii** are worth looking for.

### Mountain Ash and Whitebeam – *Sorbus* species

Nearly all the Rowans and Whitebeam are suitable for gardens, but they are all rather prone to Fireblight. **Sorbus Intermedia**, the Swedish Whitebeam, is resistant and **S. Vilmorinii** (Vilmorins Rowan) is the most beautiful of the small Mountain Ash.

### Judas Tree – *Cercis Siliquastrum*

A small tree with rosy-lilac flowers which make a fine display in May and purple tinted seed pods from July.

### Conifers

There are limited numbers of species in the mid-range sizes that will thrive in London. Most grow much too large or are dwarf slow growing forms. If you’ve plenty of space the **Deodar Cedar (Cedrus Deodara)** is most beautiful. For a more restricted site you could choose **Brewers Spruce (Picea Brewerana)**. If you’re really short of space *Juniperus Virginiana* ‘Skyrocket’ grows to about 12ft but stays slim.

## More information:

The Tree Section  
Wandsworth Council  
Wandsworth Common Depot  
Dorlcote Road  
London SW18 3RT  
Phone (020) 8871 6372