

Tree Planting Guide

District of West Vancouver

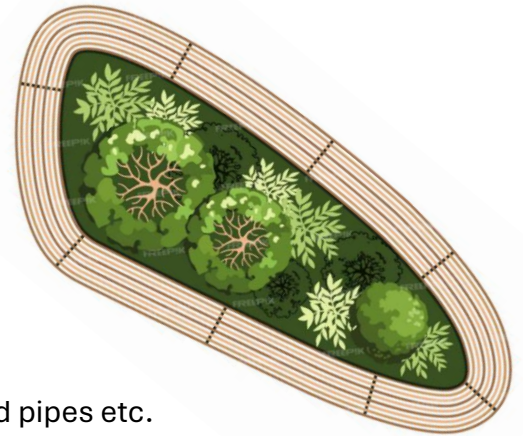
Before Planting

Site evaluation and species selection

Evaluate and assess which tree or trees are appropriate for an intended site. Consider the long-term survival of any planted trees and the value or service they can provide to the site over time (e.g. cooling and shading, rain dissipation, seasonal foliage, FireSmart)

Site conditions to consider:

- soil condition, moisture and organic material content
- size limitations from power lines, buildings, underground pipes etc.
- sunlight and existing shade that may impact tree health or growth across seasons
- community or district design standards “along a road or within a yard (e.g., Ambleside Streetscape Standards)
- FireSmart principles—is the site within 100m of a forested area?
- suitability for projected climate impacts of heat or drought



Timing

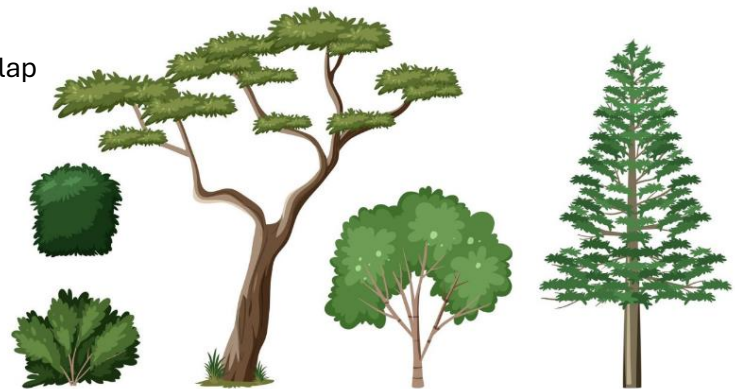
Plant in late fall or early spring. It is best to plant when the trees are dormant in the fall after leaf drop or in early spring before bud break. Cool temperatures and rain will help the trees establish roots in the new location before the summer heat sets in.

Tree Selection

Trees can be purchased in containers, as ball and burlap or bare root. When choosing a tree - assess the tree's overall condition, which affects transplant success.

An ideal tree selection will have:

- healthy and vigorous crown
- good branching structure
- wound free trunk and branches
- good root ball with abundant healthy roots



Handle With Care

Handle and transport trees with as much care as possible. Never pick a tree up by the stem, only lift from the bottom. When lifted by the stem the fibrous absorbing roots cannot hold the weight of the soil around them and will break. If care isn't taken to protect roots, you may not know important roots are damaged until the tree shows signs of struggle after planting.



Planting

1. Locate the root flare where the trunk flares or expands at the base of the tree. Note that it may be buried in the soil. If so, remove the excess soil so that it is exposed. Measure from the root flare location to the bottom of the root ball to determine how deep you need to dig your hole.
2. Dig a saucer-shaped planting hole, casting the soil in a pile beside the hole to use as backfill around the roots of the newly planted tree. Unless the site has exceptionally poor soil there is no need to bring in new soil to backfill.
 - Hole width: a hole 2 to 3 times the width of the root ball.
 - Hole depth: make sure the root flare remains above the soil for tree health. Measure from root flare to bottom of root ball and dig hole to that depth, it does not need to be any deeper.
 - Do NOT add soft fill or rock fill at the bottom of the hole.
3. Gently place the tree in the hole lifting from the bottom of the root ball - do not lift with the stem.
4. Carefully remove tree from the container or remove any burlap or wire from around the root ball. Inspect the root ball for any circling roots and straighten, cut, or remove them.
5. Carefully straighten and orient the tree in the hole the way you want it by shifting the root ball (not stem). Before adding the fill double check that the root flare will be above the ground and confirm that the tree is straight by having someone inspect from multiple angles.
6. Fill the hole and water. Use the soil that was excavated to back fill over root system. Push the soil in and around root ball to reduce air pockets. Firmly tamp down the soil at base of root ball to help create support for the tree. Before completing soil backfilling, water the newly planted tree thoroughly. Then water again once the backfilling is complete.
7. Mulch.
8. Stake if necessary.
9. Minimize pruning. Only do minimal pruning at the time of planting to minimize shock and maximize growth. Remove limbs that are diseased, dying, damaged or broken.

After Planting

Water regularly in summer

Less frequent but thorough and deep watering is best.

Maintenance

Pruning and tree training can be done on younger trees after the tree has had a chance to establish itself. Prune in late fall or early spring when tree is dormant. Maintain the tree well and top up the mulch.



For more information on tree planting, pre and post planting care, and selecting tree species, go to westvancouver.ca/climate-environment/trees

Please Note: this resource offers suggestions and guidance for successful tree planting. There are a variety of micro-climates with elevation changes and influence from the ocean, across the District—while a species may thrive at one location, it may struggle at another location. Careful tree selection for site specific needs can support long term tree health.