

### **How to plant a tree:**

Step 1: Dig your hole roughly two to three times the size of the root ball. Remove the top layer of grass in chunks; lay them to the side as you'll need them later.

Step 2: (Do at the same time as digging the hole) Remove the tree from its container. If it is in a bag, use a knife to cut the bag away. Remove any tape or tags from the tree, as it grows they can strangle it.

Step 3: Find the Root Flare (or Lateral Root). This is where the base of the tree trunk flares out into roots. The top of the Root Flare needs to be at ground level. Carefully remove soil until you find the Root Flare - It should be the size of a finger. Smaller roots above the root flare should be removed, as they will take nutrients from the root flare and then eventually dry out.

Step 4: Make 4 horizontal cuts around the root ball with a folding saw. The root ball should look like a square. "Squaring" your root ball prevents girdling roots. Girdling roots will eventually strangle your tree, preventing nutrient and water intake.

Step 5: Lower the tree into the hole to check for correct depth. The sides of the hole need to be vertical NOT sloped. Root Flare should be at ground level. Check by placing a shovel across the hole, the bottom of the shovel handle representing the soil line.

Step 6: Make sure the trunk of the tree is straight vertically. Check on each side of the tree (90 degrees).

Step 7: Fill the hole with soil and pack it down with your hand or foot. Build a berm with sod, grass side down, around the hole.

Step 8: Add mulch for the berm. Ensure your berm looks like a donut making sure the root flare is exposed, not a volcano. Place a watering device, such as gator bag, tree diaper, bucket with a hole, etc. on the tree. Clean up site.