



Planting Instructions

You've just made an important investment by purchasing superior trees from **Sierra Gold Nurseries**. *Please plant your trees as soon as possible* – using care – and by following these guidelines:

- 1. Water your trees immediately!**
Do not let your tree's roots dry out!
- 2. Avoid exposing roots to the elements**
Do not transport your trees uncovered, exposed to direct sunlight, wind or freezing temperatures.
- 3. Prepare your planting site - all weeds or grasses should be killed and removed.**
Excessive vegetation buried in the root zone may immobilize soil nitrogen, interfere with good soil to root contact or emit gases which may harm tree roots.
- 4. Dig a planting hole big enough to handle all the roots.**
Never cram roots into the tree hole! Make sure to prune damaged or excessively long roots. All roots should be pointed down or straight to the side, never upwards or encircled. Plant your tree so that the soil line from the nursery is just above the planting site soil line. Settling will occur.
- 5. Carefully firm soil around roots using your hands or gently with your feet to stabilize the tree and eliminate air pockets.**
Adequately water newly planted trees with plenty of water to thoroughly wet the planting site and help initiate soil to root contact. Once you've done this initial irrigation, be careful not to over-irrigate young trees. More trees are killed due to too much water, than not enough. Usually, the next irrigation can be delayed until there has been 6-8" of new growth from your tree.
- 6. Fertilizing at planting has generally been discouraged because of problems associated with salt injury to young sensitive roots.**
On "strong" ground, fertilizer may not be needed at all for the first 1-2 years. On weaker ground, using low rates of a quality slow release fertilizer at planting is a viable option. Definitely avoid using fertilizers in the planting hole which contain urea or chloride.
- 7. Avoid landscape irrigation**
Your home-orchard fruit tree will thrive with infrequent deep watering versus daily landscape irrigations. Try to avoid planting in a site where your automatic landscape sprinklers will constantly water your fruit trees!





Pruning Trees After Planting

After your trees are planted, they should be pruned and headed back. On branched trees, remove undesirable branches. These pruning cuts will actually help to establish proper new growth and balance the top growth with new root growth. Try following these simple guidelines for the initial post-planting pruning:

Head the Tree Back – This simply means to prune off the top of the tree. Make your cut approximately 20-30 inches above the bud union - where the rootstock and the variety top join together. Yes, you are cutting off much of the tree! But, for home orchard purposes it is important to start your trees lower. This will help to keep your tree smaller and more compact for pedestrian-styled home orchards.

Prune Back Side Branches – cut all branches back to 1-3 good buds per limb. Remove completely any undesirable branches with a clean cut back to the main scaffold. Ideally, fruit trees should only start with 3-6 side branches.