

CONTAINERIZED TREE DELIVERY CHECKLIST



The following is important information to ensure a successful planting.

✓ PREPARE YOUR GROUND

At least several weeks before delivery, soil should drain well, be thoroughly disced and free of old tree roots, weeds and clods. Large clods can cause air pockets next to tree roots.

✓ PREPARE RECEIVING AREA

Large trucks and trailers need an accessible road and receiving area for unloading. Trees can be staged prior to planting day, but make sure water is available to keep trees well hydrated. If adverse weather will affect the receiving site, arrange an alternative location where trees can be safely stored. After delivery, it is the customer's responsibility to maintain optimum plant health. Your Sierra Gold field rep can visit the planting site to ensure everything is ready.



✓ SCHEDULE DELIVERY

Notify Sierra Gold at least one week prior to the preferred delivery date. Deliveries are subject to availability of trucks and shipping times. Depending on the season, some delivery times may become impacted. A change to, or cancellation of, your delivery may result in a delay.

✓ VERIFY TREE COUNT

Once the field has been marked for planting – and prior to delivery – notify your Sierra Gold field rep with the exact number of trees needed. Occasionally, once the field is marked, and roads and headlands are taken into consideration, tree count will change from the original order number. Sierra Gold has a NO RETURN POLICY.

✓ ENSURE CREW IS IN PLACE

When the delivery truck arrives, a small crew is needed to help unload and separate the trees. Typically, a forklift is used to unload tree racks from the truck, then the crew unloads the bagged trees from racks by hand. A forklift is then needed to put the racks back onto the truck.

Truck drivers are certified forklift operators and can assist. To maintain our delivery schedules, your containerized trees should be unloaded within two hours. If the delivery contains multiple varieties, it is recommended that the individual varieties be placed in separate areas on the ground. This is especially helpful with pre-dawn deliveries.

✓ PLANTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Pre-Plant Irrigation. Soil throughout the planting zone needs to be moist at planting. Soil that is too dry makes it difficult for shovels to dig a hole and holes may cave in. Soil that is too wet will stick to shovels. Wetter soils tend to leave more air pockets. Generally, soil should form a crumbly ball in your hand when squeezed with no water dripping from it.

Dripline Placement. Keep driplines off berms, or away from hole sites, prior to planting so that damage to driplines doesn't occur. Once trees are planted, driplines should be moved closer to the tree line so that irrigation can begin immediately, especially in sandy soils.

Placing/Staging Trees Near Straws. When unloading trees off the trailer for placement, make sure the Ellepot® paper covering the root ball does not break or tear. The roots need the soil media tightly surrounding them in the hole once planted. Do not set out too many plants ahead of the planting crew. Crews can plant as fast as 10 seconds per tree.

Tree Placement in Hole. Place trees in holes so that the top of the Ellepot® (i.e. root ball) is approximately 2-3" below the soil/berm level and covered with 2-3" of native soil. It can be placed deeper, but also make sure that the bud union is above the final soil level by 3-4" (roughly the width of four fingers). Once a tree is placed in the hole, soil is piled over the root ball, then tamped down with a shovel and by stepping on it. Eliminate air gaps around the root ball so that it does not dry out.

Direction of Bud Union. The direction should have little consequence due to cartons, which protect the bud union. Some growers may want to consider the direction of strong winds. If from the north (e.g., a north wind), then the clipped part of the bud union should be on the south side. Tilting or leaning trees into the wind is not necessary if trees will be staked.

Post-Plant Irrigation. Although moist at delivery, root balls will dry out quickly once set out in fields. Trees should be planted within one hour of being set out. Additionally, native soil will slowly wick moisture away from the root ball. Check the root ball moisture after planting by removing the native soil adjacent to the planted tree, then inserting your finger into the potted soil.

Plan on tanking in trees if the drip system can't run within a day. Frequent light watering that reaches the root ball bottom is preferred during the first couple weeks after planting. Irrigation will help settle the soil and remove air pockets. Once visible roots are exiting the root ball into the native soil, irrigation frequency can decrease.

Staking Trees. Trees from the nursery will be tightly tied to a fiberglass rod, which stays in place after planting. Wooden stakes – on one side or both sides – should be placed soon after planting to prevent high winds from permanently tilting trees. A single stake should be on the side of the prevailing wind.

Fertilization. Fertilizing newly-planted trees is generally not done, especially if planted in the fall prior to trees going dormant. Young, tender roots can be injured by the toxicity of fertilizers. Never apply fertilizers to the planting hole as that may burn back fine feeder roots. Soil sampling prior to planting will indicate the nutritional needs and deficiencies of the soil. The previous crop planted in the field will influence the nutritional levels.

Cartons/Sleeves. These should be placed on trees soon after planting to protect new trees from sunlight, wind, vertebrate pests and herbicides.

Herbicides. Visit with your pest control advisor and check product labels to determine if a herbicide can be used on a new planting. A helpful UC website: ipm.ucanr.edu/agriculture/almond/herbicide-treatment-table/.



Do not tear the Ellepot® paper covering.



Tree placement in hole.



Bud union 3-4" above soil.

