



## Spruce Planting Instructions

If you are not going to plant your tree soon, some care must be taken to insure the tree's survival in the pot, particularly over winter. It is important the roots never dry in summer or winter. **In winter, the greatest threat is a cycle of repeated freezing and thawing of the roots.** We recommend that you place your tree on the north or east side of your house for the winter, or dig a hole deep enough to place the entire pot into. It is fine for the pot to freeze but not thaw and freeze repeatedly.

### Planting

**1) Dig** a hole at least 2-3 times as wide and **no** deeper than the rootball (hardpan clay may require special planting techniques). Remove large rocks and store the loosened native soil at the side of the hole.

**2) Carefully** slide the rootball out of the pot and into the hole. Make sure the top of the rootball is 1-2" above the natural grade. Staking may be done now with one sturdy stake just outside the rootball. **Do not disturb the roots of native pines unless they are extremely dense.**

**3) Backfill** the bottom 1/3 to 1/2 of the hole around the root ball with only the loosened native soil.

**4) If the tree is B&B (balled in burlap** trees are grown and root-pruned in fields, then dug-up and wrapped in burlap for sale) **cut off any twine around the trunk** and fold down and cut away the upper few inches of burlap at this time. Most burlap will rot-away. **Many trees are B&B and then placed into pots so look for twine at the base of your trees above the root-ball.**

**5) Continue** to backfill with a **soil blend**. While some books and professionals from climates milder than ours discourage the use of amendments in a backfill mix, we have found their use essential. The heavy, Sierra snow quickly compresses soils that have been merely turned.

**Kellogg's composted amendments** prevent compaction, provide aeration, stimulate soil biology, improve moisture and nutrient retention, and create a transition from the very coarse soils of most container grown plants to the finer textured native soils.

**Backfill Blend:** at least 1/2 native soil mixed with one of **Kellogg's** mature / finished composts (**Gromulch**, etc...), hydrated **Hydrosorce** water gathering gel, and **Biosol** with **Dr. Earth** Organic slow-release fertilizer. Never use lime for acid-loving pines or spruce.

**6) Mulch** with 2-3" of loose compost (**Soil Building Compost**) or shredded bark, from the edge of the rootball to out past the drip-line of the new tree. **"Dig a hole twice as wide as the rootball, mulch twice as wide as the hole."**

**Mulching should NEVER be skipped!**

**7) Water** slowly and thoroughly. Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered 2-3 times per week during the first summer and occasionally well into the fall. Even dormant trees need water to survive. Water new plantings at least once a month after October unless they receive plenty of snow or rain. Use Thanksgiving as a reminder to send your garden into winter with very moist soil. If no snow is present by Christmas, hand water new plantings again (once a month all winter if there is no substantial snowfall). **Hydrosorce water-gathering gel** reduces watering requirements. Plants will need less supplemental water each year, but few will ever be completely self-sufficient. The soil, microclimate, and each year's weather will affect a plant's chances of survival without irrigation.

**8) Staking** - One sturdy **2" pressure-treated lodgepole stake** placed just outside the rootball of your tree is best (two stakes are used for summer staking in high-wind, low snow areas only). Use a double strand of **heavy-duty (1"x 8 ml) clear tree tape** to tie the trunk of the tree in 2-3 places to the stake. This will prevent the B&B rootballs from blowing over before they become rooted.

**9) Feeding** - Along with the essential slow release fertilizer in the planting mix, acid loving evergreens such as spruce and pine will benefit from additional **summer feedings of MAXSEA Acid Plant Food**. Once a week feedings in May and June can double or triple normal growth rates. It is equally important to keep the root zone well mulched year-round in order to maintain healthy roots and a fast growing tree.

**Great Trees** - Every year we bring in a beautiful selection of spruce and pine for use as **Living Christmas Trees**. Stop by in October and November to choose the best ones. We also have a abundant offering of the  **freshest cut trees** in Truckee, often cut up until mid-December.

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