



MOORE TREES

Consulting Arborist



HOW TO PLANT A TREE

by
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From seed to leaves. P.Vezgoff, 2008

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1. Site considerations

Do you want to plant a tree? Before you purchase your new tree there are many issues you should consider. Give your tree room to grow. Trees establish more readily in autumn than in spring or summer. Trees planted in spring, particularly late spring, are trying to establish as they enter the harshest time of the year. In the case of spring or summer plantings, longer nursing and greater vigilance are essential.

Consider:

- 1.1 **Electrical wires** above the trees anticipated canopy or near it. All Electrical companies have clearance standards for their power lines. These clearance standards are there to help reduce the chance of branches making contact with the power lines thus creating fire hazards and power cuts. So, if you plant your tree too close to power lines don't be surprised if one day you find it pruned by an electrical provider.
- 1.2 **Gas & Water** pipes can be crushed by tree roots. Be sure to plant your tree away from your water pipes. If you do not know where your water pipes are then look for your water meter and an outdoor tap or your water heating system. If you are still not sure then contact your local Water Company and they will have the plans for your water services and an approximate depth of the pipes.
- 1.3 **Sewerage and Storm water** pipes must be protected from tree roots. A blocked sewer pipe can lead to toilets 'back flushing' meaning that what you put into the toilet over the last several days may reappear in the floor of your bathroom! Blocked sewer pipes from tree roots are a common problem. Often the first response from many people is to 'Cut the tree down!'. This will only increase the cost of your repair. Often the tree can be retained and the pipes repaired. Old terracotta pipes most frequently fail due to the numerous joins along them. New technology in the plumbing industry can allow pipes to be bored under trees, thus reducing the need to remove the tree and reducing damage to the root system.
- 1.4 **Potential tree location:** Do not plant too close to a boundary fence or building. Give consideration to your neighbours. Planting a tree too close to a structure can potentially damage infrastructure and lead to disputes with neighbours. If you currently have a problem with a neighbouring tree then you should read the bill for Neighbourhood Tree Disputes. This is detailed document that will guide you through a step by step process to help solve your tree related dispute with your neighbour.
- 1.5 **Root barrier** will help direct roots away from a certain area i.e. a patio, lawn, footpath or building. Root barrier is installed as a continuous sheet with no joins or holes. Root barrier can vary in depth from 150mm deep (Not very practical, nor recommended for trees) to as deep as 1200mm. Root barrier can be installed by yourself or there are specialist companies that will do the installation for you. Just be sure to locate all services prior to trenching.
- 1.6 **Selection:** Species selection is up to the individual. Try to work with existing themes. If you live in an area that has many exotic species, then work with that. But remember exotics will generally require more water than natives and will not cope as well in long drought periods.

If you select natives, when you are planting a *Eucalyptus* species make sure you choose the correct variety for your location. Some *Eucalyptus* species are massive forest trees, however there are plenty of smaller varieties to choose from. Please do your research properly. Speak with your local nursery, National Park and Wildlife Service or your Local Council for information on endemic tree species in your area. You could also visit a local Botanic Garden for ideas and further information.

2. How to plant your new tree

Now that you have your new tree here are some simple tips to follow when planting.

- 2.1 Put the soil aside that you have dug from the hole. The hole should be at least twice the diameter of the container or root ball so that the backfill soil can be worked in easily around the plant.
- 2.2 Don't cultivate the bottom of the hole. Your new tree will settle too deep and may possibly develop a stem rot. If you are keen to dig a large hole then dig wider rather than deeper.
- 2.3 Where sand or gravel has been placed in the bottom of planting holes, supposedly for the purpose of improving drainage of the soil above, this will in fact have just the opposite effect. This layer will unfortunately cause the soil above to become saturated when it otherwise would not.
- 2.4 Roots matted at the bottom or circling around the root ball of container-grown plants should be cut and removed or shortened and/or straightened. If these roots are not removed they will continue to grow in a circular restricted manner called 'Girdling'.
- 2.5 Don't backfill with compost. Compost is organic matter and without oxygen will begin to decompose below ground and eventually kill your tree.
- 2.6 Backfill with the soil you have dug from the hole. If your site soil is unusable then back fill with a soil mix that is sand and loam based rather than using organic matter.
- 2.7 If you have planted your tree in a lawn area try to cultivate around the base so that the new roots will not compete with grass roots. Also cut the top off a plastic bottle then cut it down the side. Slip this around the trunk at ground level. This little device will prevent your new tree suffering Wippersnipper Ringbark Of the Trunk (WROT), a very common cause of early death of young trees.
- 2.8 **Agricultural drainage pipe:** To help make watering more effective when you plant your tree insert a length of Agricultural drainage pipe. This will help water and also oxygen get to the base of the planting hole.
- 2.9 **Staking:** If your tree is located in a position where it may be vandalised then you may have to stake and tie the tree. You should use at least use two (2) stakes to secure your tree. Use a tie that will flex with the wind. Your local nursery will have some form of material or use an old stocking.

3. Watering

- 3.1** After being planted (carefully), the single most important need of a newly-planted tree is to receive adequate moisture. As a general rule one (1) bucket of water twice a week should suffice. Water must be concentrated on the existing rootball. An important point to remember is that moisture will not flow from wet surrounding soils back into the rootball. So, watering must concentrate on wetting the rootball itself. Below are some watering quantities specifically for Australian conditions *.

Container size	Tree height	Trunk Diameter	Litres/week
15-20 Ltrs	1.5-2metres	30mm	5
40-50 Ltrs	2.1-3.0metres	50mm	8
75-100 Ltrs	3.1-4metres	75mm	12

- 3.2** A sturdy levy that will retain water must be built (and maintained) around the edge of the rootball of each tree. The pond created within the levy should be regularly filled with water.
- 3.3** If the watering basin is remaining wet between each watering then take a break from watering. It is good for the root ball to dry out between waterings.
- 3.4** Do not stop watering in the event of rain. It might wet the ground but, unless heavy and/or prolonged, rain normally will not deliver adequate moisture to the rootball.
- 3.5** If the new growth on your tree is showing signs of wilting then water as soon as possible. If the new growth is wilting and the soil is waterlogged then the problem is below ground level.

4. Aftercare

Once your tree begins to grow another important aspect is formative pruning. Formative pruning is the process of removing lower branches, twin stems, or deadwood that may impact on the trees shape or structure at maturity. It will also help your tree grow in height rather than grow too many lower branches. Any pruning of trees at maturity should be completed by a qualified and insured tree surgeon. To contact a tree surgeon try one of the associations below.

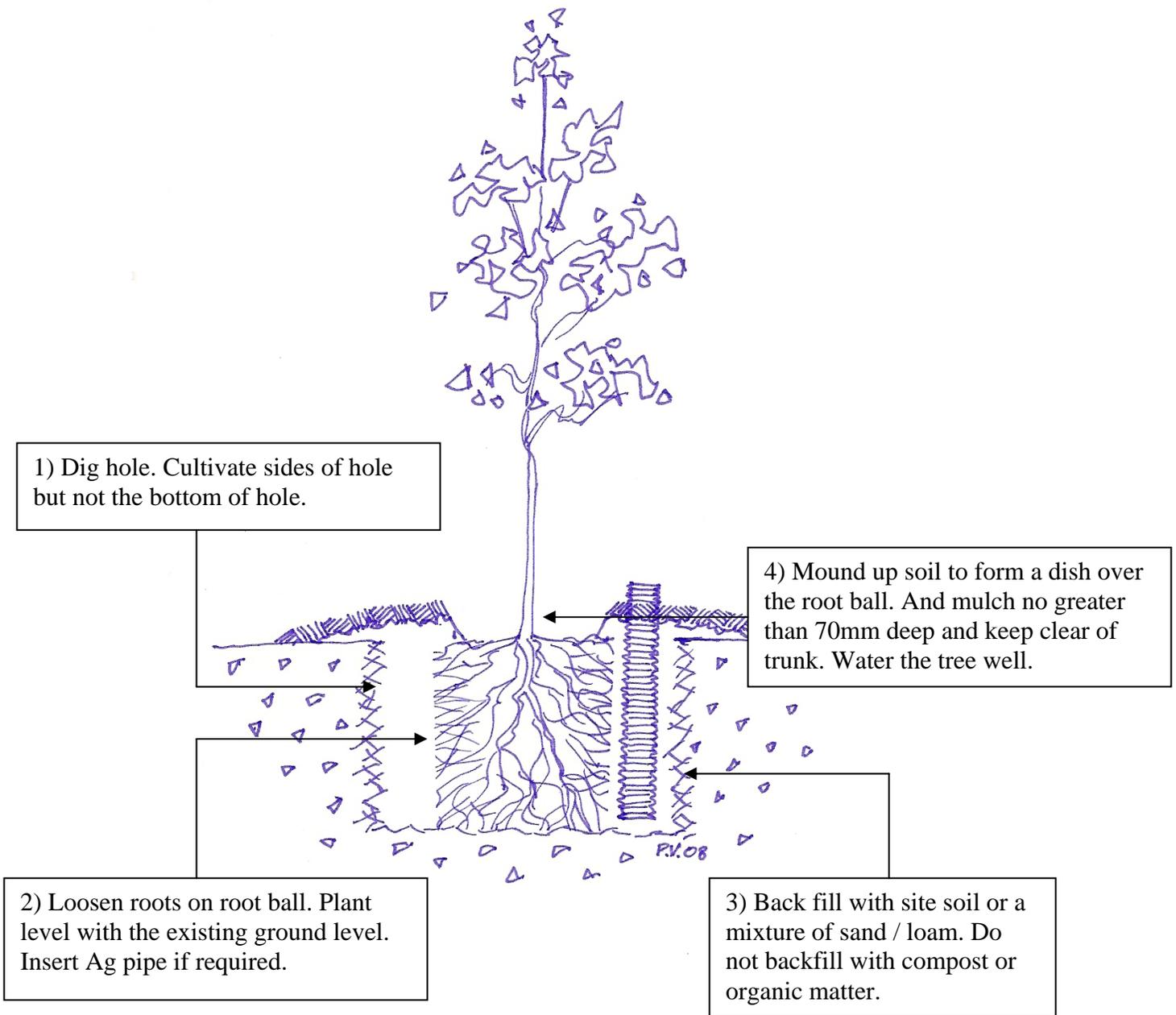
Contact the National Arborists Association Australia (NAAA) on www.naaa.net.au

or

Tree Contractors Association Australia (TCAA) on www.tcaa.com.au



* Recommended by James Will, Senior Lecturer, Burnley College of Melbourne.



Tree planting diagram

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