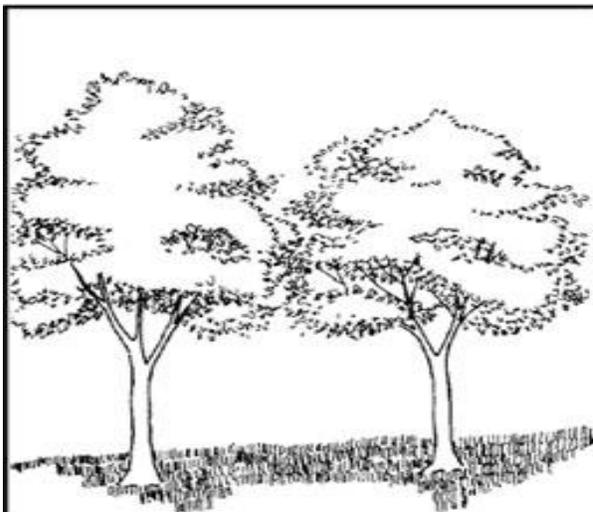




## How to Plant/Replant Cleared Areas to comply with Critical Area Planting Agreements (CAPAs)

- **On the CAPA signed by the homeowner and a representative of St. Mary's County Land Use and Growth Management you will find:**
  1. NUMBER of TREES & SHRUBS (or grasses/ground cover if it is determined that your site cannot support woody vegetation)
  2. LOCATION of the planting (i.e. anywhere on lot, within the Critical Area Buffer, as shown on approved planting plan)
  3. SPECIES REQUIREMENTS (native plants and/or salt tolerant)
  4. SIZE (i.e. one/three gallon, 6' tall/12' tall, 1"/2.5" caliper)
  5. INSPECTION DATE – date by which the plantings must be completed – usually are given 2 plantings seasons which are Spring and Fall
- **Planting Seasons**
  1. CAPAs are expected to be completed and inspected within 2 planting seasons
  2. Each Spring/Fall is a planting season
  3. 'Dormant' season = Ideal time to plant
    - In the Spring before bud break
    - In the Fall after leaf drop
- **Planting Configuration/Intention of Critical Area Planting Agreements**
  1. These Plantings are not intended to be decorative landscaping, rather the replacement or establishment of forest or developed woodlands shall assure a diversified plant population by including a canopy layer, and understory layer and a shrub layer. Other types of plantings may be approved where it is necessary to correct an existing soil stabilization problem or when plantings are to occur on soils not suited to forest development.

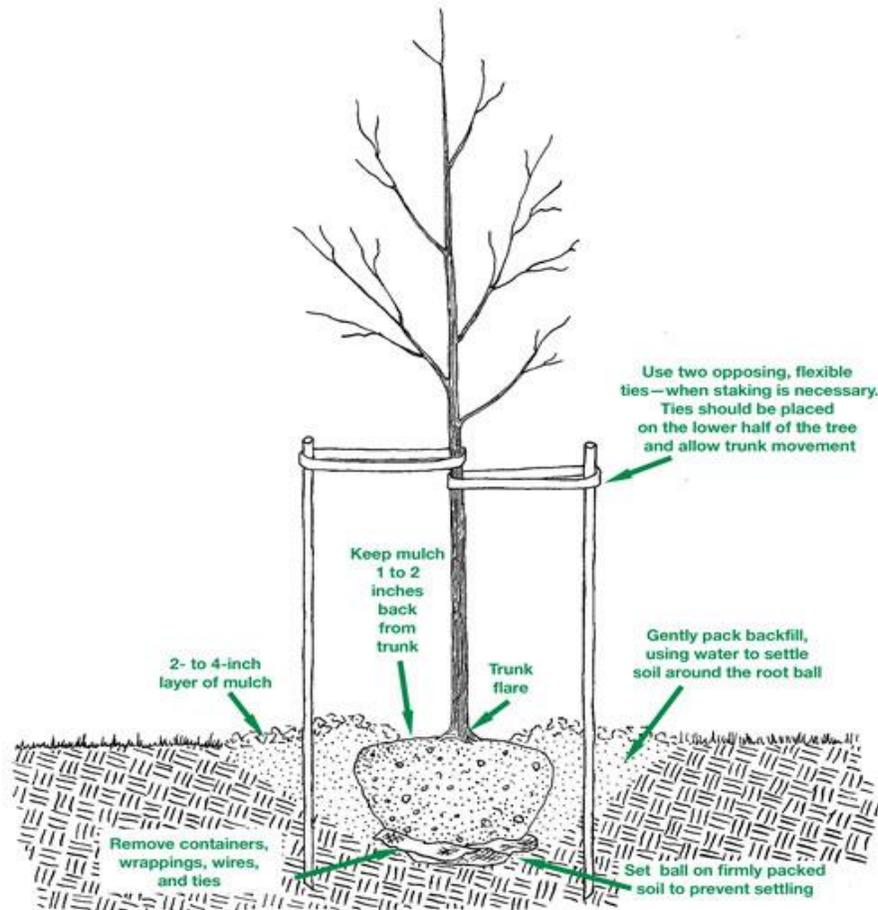


Minimally effective configuration



Most effective configuration

- How to Plant a Tree
  1. **Dig a shallow, broad planting hole.** Make the hole wide, as much as three times the diameter of the root ball but only as deep as the root ball. It is important to make the hole wide because the roots on the newly establishing tree must push through surrounding soil in order to establish. On most planting sites in new developments, the existing soils have been compacted and are unsuitable for healthy root growth. Breaking up the soil in a large area around the tree provides the newly emerging roots room to expand into loose soil to hasten establishment.
  2. **Identify the trunk flare.** The trunk flare is where the roots spread at the base of the tree. This point should be partially visible after the tree has been planted (see diagram). If the trunk flare is not partially visible, you may have to remove some soil from the top of the root ball. Find it so you can determine how deep the hole needs to be for proper planting.
  3. **Remove tree container for containerized trees.** Carefully cutting down the sides of the container may make this easier. Inspect the root ball for circling roots and cut or remove them. Expose the trunk flare, if necessary.
  4. **Place the tree at the proper height.** Before placing the tree in the hole, check to see that the hole has been dug to the proper depth, and no more. The majority of the roots on the newly planted tree will develop in the top 12 inches of soil. If the tree is planted too deeply, new roots will have difficulty developing because of a lack of oxygen. It is better to plant the tree a little high, 2 to 3 inches above the base of the trunk flare, than to plant it at or below the original growing level. This planting level will allow for some settling (see diagram). To avoid damage when setting the tree in the hole, always lift the tree by the root ball and never by the trunk.
  5. **Straighten the tree in the hole.** Before you begin backfilling, have someone view the tree from several directions to confirm that the tree is straight. Once you begin backfilling, it is difficult to reposition the tree.
  6. **Fill the hole gently but firmly.** Fill the hole about one-third full and gently but firmly pack the soil around the base of the root ball. Then, if the root ball is wrapped, cut and remove any fabric, plastic, string, and wire from around the trunk and root ball to facilitate growth (see diagram). Do not damage the trunk or roots in the process.



Fill the remainder of the hole, taking care to firmly pack soil to eliminate air pockets that may cause roots to dry out. To avoid this problem, add the soil a few inches at a time and settle with water. Continue this process until the hole is filled and the tree is firmly planted. It is not recommended to apply fertilizer at the time of planting.

7. **Stake the tree, if necessary.** If the tree is grown and dug properly at the nursery, staking for support will not be necessary in most home landscape situations. Studies have shown that trees establish more quickly and develop stronger trunk and root systems if they are not staked at the time of planting. However, protective staking may be required on sites where vandalism or windy conditions are concerns. If staking is necessary for support, there are three methods to choose among: staking, guying, and ball stabilizing. One of the most common methods is staking. With this method, two stakes used in conjunction with a wide, flexible tie material on the lower half of the tree will hold the tree upright, provide flexibility, and minimize injury to the trunk (see diagram). Remove support staking and ties after the first year of growth.
8. **Mulch the base of the tree.** Mulch is simply organic matter applied to the area at the base of the tree. It acts as a blanket to hold moisture, it moderates soil temperature extremes, and it reduces competition from grass and weeds. Some good choices are leaf litter, pine straw, shredded bark, peat moss, or composted wood chips. A 2- to 4-inch layer is ideal. More than 4 inches may cause a problem with oxygen and moisture levels. When placing mulch, be sure that the actual trunk of the tree is not covered. Doing so may cause decay of the living bark at the base of the tree. A mulch-free area, 1 to 2 inches wide at the base of the tree, is sufficient to avoid moist bark conditions and prevent decay.

9. **Provide follow-up care.** Keep the soil moist but not soaked; over-watering causes leaves to turn yellow or fall off. Water trees at least once a week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather. When the soil is dry below the surface of the mulch, it is time to water. Continue until mid-fall, tapering off for lower temperatures that require less-frequent watering.

#### Sources

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