

Planting Trees in Ontario: Best Practices for a Thriving Landscape

Planting a tree is a gift to future generations—a legacy of beauty, shade, and ecological balance. If you're in Barrie or anywhere in Ontario, here's a friendly, hopeful guide to help your trees thrive.

1. Choose the Right Tree for Your Space

Ontario's diverse climate means that choosing the right tree species is crucial. Consider factors like soil type, sunlight, and space when selecting a tree.

2. Dig a Proper Planting Hole

- **Width Over Depth:** Dig a hole 2–3 times wider than the root ball but no deeper.
- **Root Flare Exposure:** Ensure the root flare (where roots meet the trunk) is level with or slightly above ground level.
- **Soil Quality:** Use native soil for backfilling; avoid adding fertilizers or amendments directly into the hole.

3. Water Wisely

- **Initial Watering:** Water thoroughly after planting to settle the soil around the roots.
- **Ongoing Care:** During the first growing season, water deeply once or twice a week, depending on rainfall. Aim for about 15–20 minutes per session.
- **Avoid Overwatering:** Ensure the soil drains well; standing water can harm roots.

5. Protect the Tree

- **Staking:** See guide to tree staking. If you need to stake, use soft ties and remove them after one growing season to allow natural movement.
- **Trunk Protection:** Proper mulching will help protect trunks against mechanical damage from lawn equipment. Add trunk guards in the fall before winter, but only after the tree has stopped growing for the season. Remove them in early spring after the last hard frost has passed, but before the tree's bark expands with warmer temperatures. The purpose of the guard is to prevent damage from sunscald and animal activity (like deer rubbing or rodent chewing) during the dormant season.

6. Seasonal Care Tips

- **Fall:** Water trees until the ground freezes to ensure roots are hydrated.
- **Winter:** Apply mulch in late fall to insulate roots and retain moisture. Avoid walking on frozen soil near the tree to prevent compaction.
- **Spring:** Check for signs of new growth and remove any winter-damaged branches.

7. More Local Resources

- **Simcoe County Master Gardeners:** Offer workshops and advice on tree planting and care.
- **Barrie Public Library:** Provides resources and information on local tree species and gardening practices.
- **City of Barrie:** Offers guidelines and support for urban forestry initiatives.

A Call to Action

By following these best practices, you're not just planting a tree; you're contributing to a healthier, more sustainable environment. Each tree you plant helps combat climate change, supports local wildlife, and enhances the beauty of our community. Let's work together to green Barrie, one tree at a time.

Planting a tree? TAG US on [Instagram](#) & [Facebook](#)