



When is the best time for planting trees? Now!!

Fall is absolutely, hands-down, the best time to plant trees. The cooling temperatures and shortening daylight hours signal to the tree to enter its root-building phase. During this phase, all energy is being sent to the roots, so the tree isn't worried about growing new leaves or branches. The tree then has time to establish new roots before winter comes, during which time it will become dormant. The rule of thumb is to be in the ground at least six weeks before the ground freezes.

Here in Indiana, the ground freezes in January, so there's plenty of time for your new trees to dig into their new homes. During the root-building phase, you will not fertilize the tree, but rather use a Root Stimulator to help the tree develop a more vigorous root system. The cooler temperatures are also less stressful to newly planted trees and shrubs, and the gentle rains that come in fall help roots absorb moisture.

So, what's the best way to plant a tree?

- 1) Dig a hole that is one and a half times larger than the tree's pot.
- 2) Take the soil you removed and mix it half and half with a soil amending agent, like compost.
- 3) Put your soil mixture into the bottom of the hole to lift your tree to the proper height. Hint: Remove the pot from the tree and use that to measure your size and height. It will be much easier.
- 4) With the pot removed, rough up and loosen the tree's roots.
- 5) Place the tree in the hole and backfill with your soil mixture, being careful not to bury the root flare, and gently compressing the soil just enough to hold the tree in place.
- 6) Apply a 2" thick layer of mulch over the entire dug area but keep mulch from directly touching the tree. Just use your finger and draw a little donut around the tree's trunk.
- 7) Water your tree by the trickle method: Put the hose on a tiny stream of water, smaller than your little finger, and place the hose at the base of the tree. Let the water run at least 10 minutes or more, depending on the size of your tree. Do this twice a week until the leaves fall.
- 8) In between waterings, use Root Stimulator according to directions to promote root growth.

And that's it! You've planted a tree!