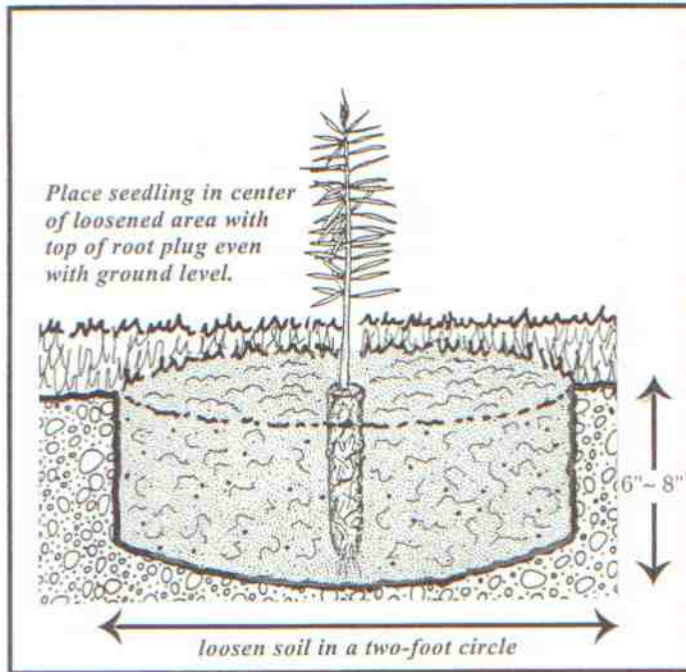


Planting and Caring for a Tree Seedling



Care of seedling

Keep the seedling in its container until immediately before planting to protect its delicate roots. Set it upright in a shady spot and protect it from extreme temperatures, high winds and direct sunlight. Plant the seedling as soon as possible. The potting medium dries out quickly so water the seedling every few days. Stand it in a container and sprinkle until water drips out the bottom of the tube.

You may want to plant the seedling in a large pot and let it grow larger before planting it in your yard. It may be left outside during the winter if covered by a deep layer of snow. Plant within the following two years so that it does not become pot bound.

Ground preparation

Choose a sunny place for the seedling to grow; a spot where it will not interfere with buildings, other plants, or utility lines when it is mature. Prepare a planting area about two feet in diameter by clearing all vegetation and using a shovel or hoe to loosen the soil. Loosen as deep as the length of the roots, from the top of the root plug to the bottom of the roots, about six to eight inches. You may add organic matter if you mix it evenly throughout the loosened soil. Make a hole in the center of the planting area the same depth as the loosened soil.

More information

For more information on planting and caring for trees, contact the Division of Forestry or Alaska Cooperative Extension office in your area, or the Division of Forestry's Urban & Community Forestry Office at 550 W. Seventh Avenue, Suite 1450, Anchorage, AK 99501-3566; 269-8465 or 269-8466.

Planting the seedling

Gently cut off any exposed roots growing from the bottom of the tube. Carefully slip the seedling from the tube, disturbing the roots as little as possible.

Place the seedling into the hole so that the top of the root plug is even with the ground level. It is very important to not plant the top of the root plug below ground level.

While holding the tree at the proper level, push the loose soil in around the roots. Make sure the roots go straight down. Firm the soil around the roots with your hand so that there are no air pockets. Water lightly to help settle the soil.

Placing two to three inches of mulch—compost or composted bark or wood chips—around the tree will help it retain moisture and prevent freeze and thaw cycles which can damage the tree. Keep the mulch two to three inches away from the trunk.

Water the seedling after planting and then as needed to keep the soil from drying out, about once each week. It is best to not fertilize your tree until the following spring. Use stakes or fencing to protect your seedling from people, animals and lawnmowers.

Avoid common planting errors:

