ESTABLISHING NEW PLANTS AND TREES

You’ve invested your time and money into planting a new landscape or a few new trees. The most important step comes now, when you must give extra care to your plantings to help them get properly established in your landscape.

**Stake** your new tree if it needs help standing up. Proper staking still allows the tree to move and bend with the wind, which allows the tree to develop proper structure. Trees that are staked without flexibility to move or are staked for too long do not develop as good of a root system or the proper trunk taper. Staking materials should be removed as soon as they are no longer needed. Generally you can remove staking materials after six months. A good quality tree will generally not need staking for very long!

**Water** is critical the first few months of your new plant’s life in your landscape. Hopefully you watered your new tree generously when you planted it. A general rule is to water trees with a 2- 4” diameter every day for a month, then every other day for 3 months, then weekly until established. Trees with a diameter greater than 4” should be watered daily for six weeks, every other day for five months, then weekly until established.

**Fertilize** your plants using a slow-release, low nitrogen fertilizer. Container-grown plants usually have slow release fertilizer when you purchase them (that’s the white pellets in the soil). Trees and shrubs will benefit from fertilizer when you plant them, but groundcovers do not need it. Continue to properly fertilize your landscape even after it is established.

**Mulch** helps to retain moisture, deters weeds, and protects the tree from damage by weed-eaters and lawn mowers. Use a few inches of mulch around the trunk but keep it from touching the trunk, as this can cause it to rot. We recommend Eucalyptus, Melaleuca, or the City of Plantation’s recycled mulch. The City’s mulch is available from Public Works' Recycling Center. Please do not use Cypress Mulch or Red Mulch.

Protect your tree from injury, both now and for the rest of its life. Take care not to injure roots, branches, or any part of the trunk. This will help to ensure that the tree has a long and healthy life.

If you have any questions call the Department of Landscape Architecture at 954.797.2246 or e-mail our Tree Gurus, Marge and Fred, at askMargeandFred@plantation.org