

When to Plant:

Spring is usually the best time to plant trees. Soil moisture is usually good, and cooler conditions help to prevent young seedlings from drying out. In southern Minnesota, planting is usually best from early April to early May. In northern Minnesota, planting is usually best from late April to mid-May.

Handling and Storage:

Many trees die before they even get their roots in the ground. It is highly important that young, bareroot tree seedlings are kept cool and moist right up until the time they are planted. When you receive your seedlings, make sure you check to see if the roots are moist. If they are especially dry and crackly, return them to your place of purchase. If they are somewhat dry, wet them down and try to plant them as soon as possible. If you need to store the seedlings for a few days before planting, keep them in the package you received them in and place them in a cool, well-shaded spot that allows for some air circulation around the package.

Planting:

During the planting process, make sure the tree roots are kept moist and are not exposed to periods of sunlight and drying. Even a few minutes of having a seedling's roots exposed to a light breeze on a sunny day can kill the roots (and the seedlings).

Seedlings and small transplants can be easily planted using a spade, shovel, or planting bar. Make sure the hole is deep and wide enough to allow the roots to spread out and fully extend downward. Avoid shallow or small holes, which will cause the roots to ball up, twist, or J-root (ends of the roots point toward the sky).

As you are planting, make sure the trees are at the proper depth. If you look carefully at one of the trees, you will see a natural transition between the root and stem of the tree. Plant the trees to this depth.

Once a tree is properly positioned, in the hole, pack the soil in gently around it. If practical, water the tree to settle and moisten the soil. Tug lightly on the tree once planted; if it comes out of the hole easily, you will need to pack the soil more firmly.