

# Frank P Matthews Ltd - TREES FOR LIFE

## BARE ROOT TREES - HANDLING and PLANTING TIPS

We want your trees to be well planted and perform well, and hope that the following tips will guide you in the handling, storage, planting and aftercare. If you have access to our book 'Trees for your garden' by Nick Dunn ISBN: 978-0-904853-08-7 there is a well illustrated planting guide on page 14.

### Delivery:

- ✓ As soon as you take delivery of the trees, remove them from the packaging but do not unwrap the roots but place the trees in a cool but frost-proof shed. They can remain that way for one week.
- ✓ If the trees are not going to be planted within one week, dig a small trench, unwrap the roots, cut the strings, water them well, and immediately place them in the trench (**this is heeling in**) and cover all the roots with the backfill making sure it has been finely chopped up. Firm the soil around the roots with your feet.
- ✓ **Check the trees daily especially for vermin damage from mice and rabbits.**

### Before planting

- ✓ Make sure that soil is not frozen and that the air temperature is above freezing.
- ✓ Only dig the planting holes just before planting, never in advance, not even the day before.
- ✓ Dig a hole slightly bigger than the roots of the tree but some root pruning of excessively long roots will do no harm to the tree. This saves having to dig excessively large holes.
- ✓ If you are staking the trees knock the stake in at the side of the hole that is the 'windward' side so that the tree is generally blown away from the stake by the prevailing wind (generally from the west).
- ✓ Do not delay planting the tree if compost and bonemeal are not available. Bonemeal sprinkled around the tree afterwards is perfectly good and mulching (see below) will help also.

### Planting

- ✓ If unwrapping the tree at this stage make sure the roots are moist, if dry, immerse the roots in a bucket of water for 5 minutes. If the trees have been stored for longer than a week or appear dry they can be immersed in water for an hour or two before planting.
- ✓ Place the tree in the planting hole and make sure that the 'graft/bud' union which is just above the roots remains at least 2"-3" (5-8cm) above ground level.
- ✓ Mostly fill the hole with the soil mix and firm well with your feet and then place the last of the soil loosely over the top.

- ✓ Apply a tree tie leaving sufficient room for two fingers between tree and tie and guard for rabbits with a spiral guard or cut up galvanised mesh fencing 2'x2' and bend around the tree.

### **After planting**

- ✓ Watering of the tree is only necessary if planted after February 1<sup>st</sup> and then one bucket is sufficient per tree.
- ✓ Mulching trees with any organic matter that is well rotted or even old bits of carpet, cardboard etc is good to help retain moisture and reduce weed or grass competition especially in the first year.
- ✓ Additional fertiliser is not necessary at this stage, further advice should be taken if the soil is particularly poor.

### **Pruning**

- ✓ Pruning trees after planting is important especially for bare root trees. When a bare root tree is lifted from the nursery its root system is reduced considerably and therefore its branches need to be reduced also to balance the tree. This will also encourage the tree to make extension growth in the first year and stimulate fruit bud nearer the main stem.
- ✓ In principle reduce all lateral branches by at least 1/3 after planting and prune to an outward facing bud.

# Important

**MAKE SURE COMPETITION FROM GRASS AND WEEDS IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM**

**AND**

**NEVER LET A STRIMMER COME ANYWHERE NEAR YOUR TREE!**

We wish you every success, look after your trees well!

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