

# Handling Bare Root Trees

## When the Truck Arrives

Handle the bundles gently, as the trunks can be easily scraped by rough handling. Avoid walking on the load: if it is absolutely necessary, wear soft soled shoes. Because fine roots can quickly be damaged by freezing, it is important to unload your trees in a covered location if temperatures are near or below freezing. Water the roots as soon as possible after unloading.

If your shipment is part of a combination load, be careful of other customers' trees in the truck. Remove the packing material that protected your trees during shipment. Do not leave it on the truck! **As a courtesy to others, please moisten the rest of the trees in the truck before it departs.**

## Outdoor Storage and Care

Outdoor storage is probably more popular in milder areas, but can be done in colder climates as well. Trees are heeled into a moist, well drained material that will pack around the roots: sawdust, bark, sand, peat, or even well drained soil. Straw is not appropriate for heeling in outdoors. Stand the trees up, cover the roots, and water thoroughly to settle the media around the root systems. Heeling in on the north side of a barn will provide shade and help keep buds from breaking too early.

If trees are held in outdoor heeling-in beds, they will need little care. Watch for bud break and try to plant before it occurs. If soil conditions prevent timely planting, you may need to cut bundle ties to open up the heads of the trees to prevent damage.

**There are many ways to store bare root trees, and the best technique will depend on your climate and the facilities available. The best method is the one that works for you.**

**Our sales representatives can provide local expertise on successful handling techniques for your area.**

## Indoor Storage and Care

Coolers are ideal for storage, if available. A cold barn or potato storage shed can also work very well. Temperatures should be kept between 32 °F and 42 °F. You will need supplemental heat if there is a risk of the temperature dropping below 30 °F inside the building and the roots are exposed.

Indoors, trees can be stored upright with roots heeled in, just like outdoors. If trees are heeled into a solid medium, there is no need to worry about freezing temperatures. If watered every couple of days, straw can be used indoors for heeling in, but it provides little insulation if storage temperatures are freezing.

Alternatively, trees can be placed flat on the ground. Roots may be covered with straw, peat, shredded paper or other material that holds moisture, and watered regularly. Many growers cover the pile of bare root trees with canvas or plastic, and water occasionally under the cover.

Indoor storage requires more care. Water trees as needed to prevent drying. Check trees daily to be sure the roots are moist; don't let the roots dry out! Hosing down the floor of the building helps raise humidity level and prevents drying.

Depending on your storage conditions, watering needs will probably vary from daily to weekly. If uncertain, err on the side of moisture. If trees are held indoors for very long, they may be attacked by a fungus such as Botrytis, and approved fungicides may be needed.

## Pruning

Prompt and careful pruning of your bare root trees is important for their development of proper structure and future sales appeal. Trees may be pruned after unloading, while in storage, or before or after planting. It is usually best to prune before shoot elongation occurs, and as close to planting time as possible. Buds will often be swelling at this time, so you can prune to healthy live buds. If trees must be held too long in storage because of wet field conditions, prune them to remove some of the new growth that may have occurred. This will lessen the shock of late transplanting.

## Planting Your Trees

Plant as early as possible in well prepared soil. Early planting generally gives best initial survival, and best first season growth. It also gives the trees a full growing season to become acclimated to your location before winter weather hits. Ideally, trees should be planted by the time natural bud break occurs in your area. To be sure of planting at the right depth, refer to our "Proper Planting Depth" guide on the reverse side of this sheet..

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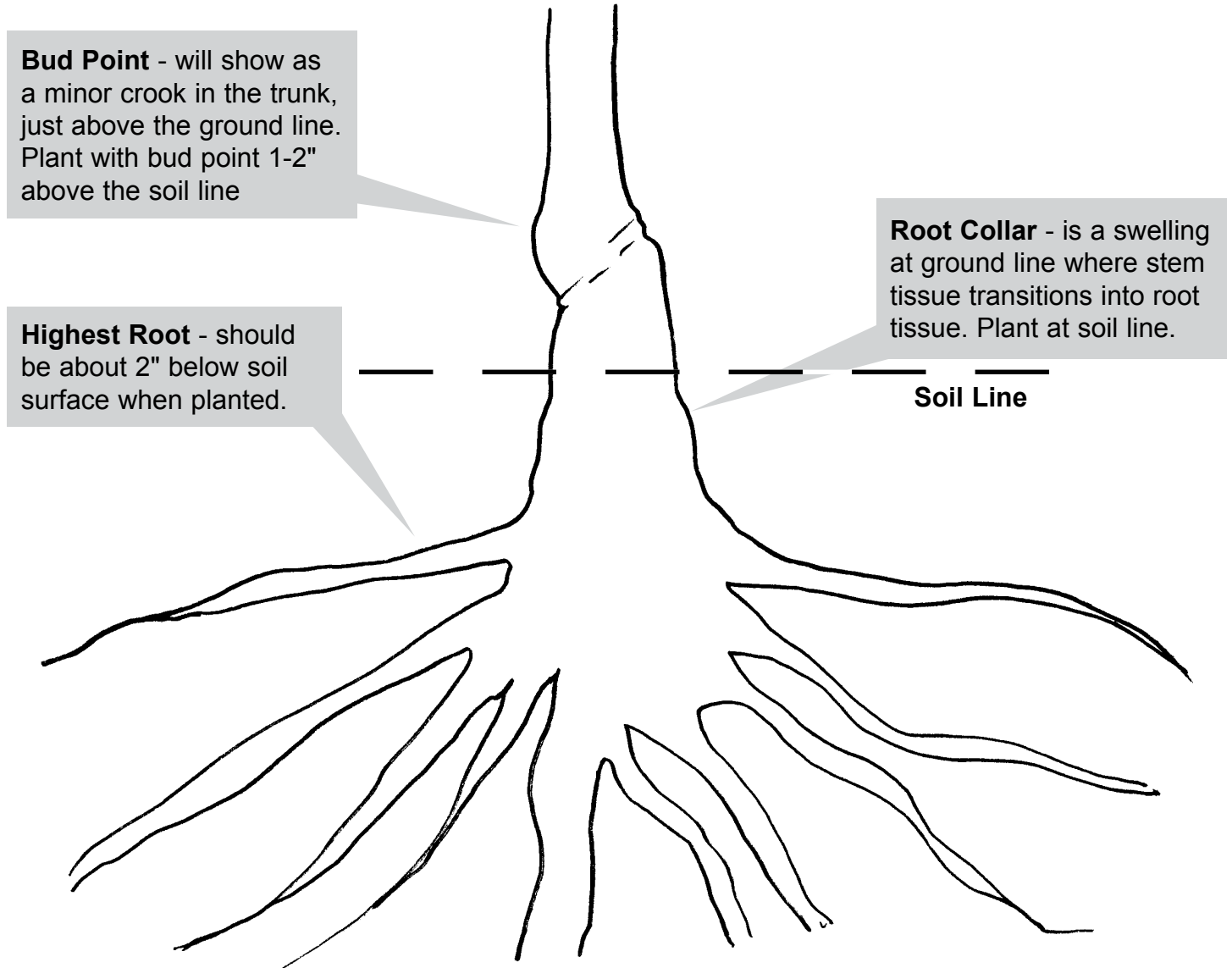
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# Proper Planting Depth

Some nurseries have recently had their trees questioned or rejected by arborists because they were believed to be planted too deep. Planting depth is important to the tree's health and your sales. Use this guide for planting bare root stock.

Every tree is different, but you can use the bud point, the root collar, and the position of the top root as guides to planting depth.

Landscapers should plant your finished trees with the top of the ball or container about 2" higher than the surrounding landscape, with soil and mulch smoothing the transition.



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