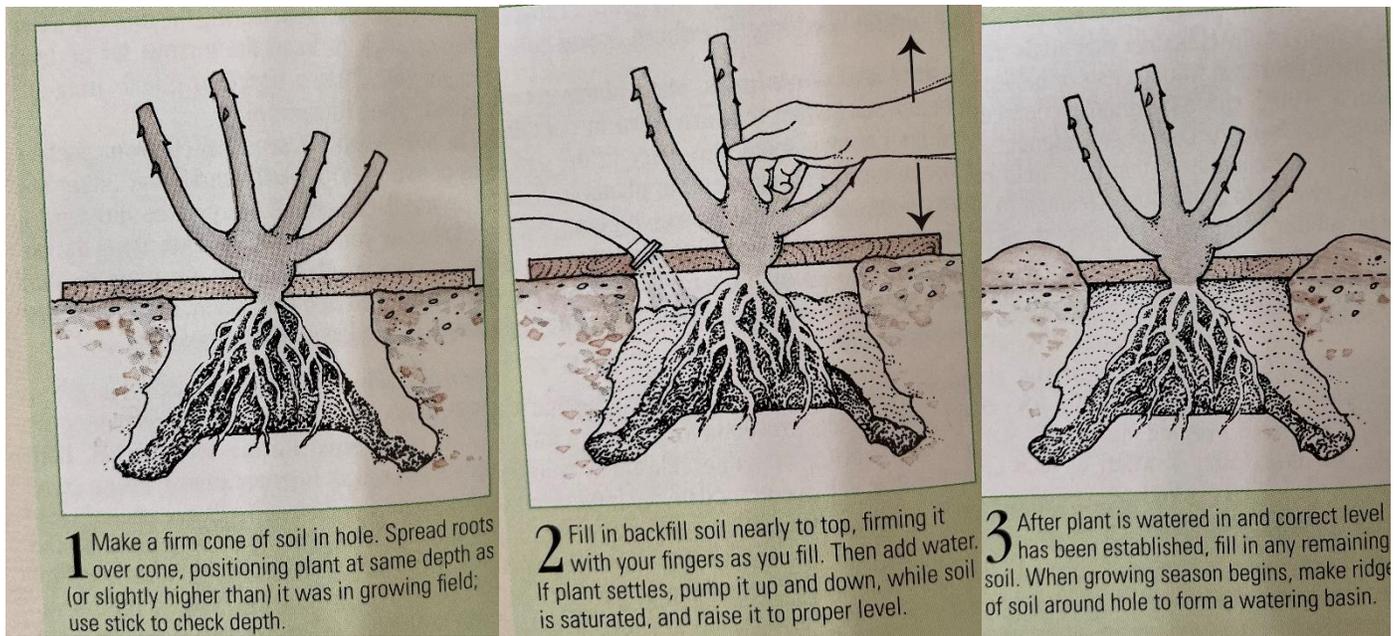


Planting Bare Root Woody Plants

Bare root plants are a great way to get plants going in a cost-efficient matter! It's a great way to get a berry patch growing! They can be a little tricky though but following these instructions should help you get your plants going! First—try to plant them as soon as possible. The longer the bare root plants are out of soil the more likely it is for their dormant roots to become damaged. Early spring is a great time of year to get them in the ground. Always soak your roots in a bucket for a few hours before planting to rehydrate them. After soaking, they're ready to get planted! Below are some great planting visual instructions from the Sunset National Garden Book from Sunset books inc.



After the initial watering be watchful of soil moisture. Too much water can prevent or delay the formation of new feeder roots. When the temperatures rise be sure to compensate with more water but again, keep it moist but not wet and swampy! It's very important that you never allow your plant to dry out. Water your plant deeply and infrequently if there is less than 1 inch of rainfall a week. After planting use mulching to cover the soil around the base. This will help suppress weeds, prevent moisture loss due to evaporation, prevent compaction (which will slow or harm root development) and keep young developing roots cool and protected! If planting a bare root tree, staking is going to be important as your plant doesn't have roots to anchor itself properly. It will need to be loosely staked for at least one year after planting.

Don't worry about fertilizing the plant for *at least* four weeks. The young developing roots are very sensitive to fertilizer salts. Give them plant time to grow and establish. Incorporating your planting hole with compost will give your young growing plant plenty of gentle energy to get started on! Once enough time has passed, using a slow-release fertilizer is another great gentle way to feed your plant—one application is enough for the entire growing season and there is significantly lower risk of burning young roots.

FAQ:

Q: How long will these plants store until I can plant them? How can I store them?

A: Storing bare root plants can be tricky. It's extremely important to make sure the roots stay moist and get good airflow at the same time. If kept at room temperature for too long they may start to break bud. Once this happens it's important to get them planted as soon as possible as they are no longer dormant. If you have bare root plants with good moisture and no bud activity storing them in a refrigerated (between 38-45 degrees) and humid environment can slow the wake-up process. The best alternative to storage other than refrigeration (especially if there is bud activity) is to plant them temporarily in pots with moist soil and placing these in locations that only get part sun. Once in pots, they can remain there for long periods of time until you are ready to plant -- just remember to water!

Q: Can I trim the roots to help them fit into the hole better. Do I need to prune the tops prior to planting?

A: If any roots or branches are obviously dead or damaged, they can be pruned off but cutting to shorten roots would be unwise. Avoiding any damage to healthy roots is critical to helping your plant get established! Again, only prune dead, diseased or damaged branches. The remaining can stay. Any existing buds will be useful in helping the plant get established. Having to develop new buds to leaf out instead of using existing buds can be a huge energy sink for the developing plant.

Q: Will I still get fruit the first season?

A: No, fruit within the first season for a bare root plant isn't recommended as this energy can be put into developing its roots and shoots so it can have more impressive yields in the near future and help it get established to prevent winter damage. If you see developing fruits, removing them is recommended. More than likely—the plant will not produce any.

Q: My shrub is growing leaves—does this mean it is established?

A: Not necessarily! Some plant varieties will break buds and start growing new leaves before growing new roots. This can make it stressful for the plant as it now will be losing water through the foliage. Therefore, it's important to make sure it's mulched and well-watered. In general, it can take a minimum of 2 years or more for plants to be considered established so keep watch over your new plant babies over the next few years!