planting
and
transplanting
evergreens

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PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING EVERGREENS

Many sizes and kinds of evergreens are used in field, farmstead and city plantings. In shelterbelts and hedges, small seedling or transplant sizes of pine, spruce or redcedar are used, while the large balled specimen trees are used in ornamental plantings, especially around the farmstead and the home.

SOIL AND MOISTURE REQUIREMENTS

Evergreens usually will grow on most soil types. They will grow poorly or not at all on soils that are highly alkaline, tight and poorly drained, soils with a hard pan close to the surface, old straw stack bottoms and manure piles. A rich sandy loam is best for most varieties; however, evergreens can be grown successfully in heavy clay soils if organic matter is mixed into the soil.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty comes from planting the trees in foundation plantings where the subsoil from the basement and building refuse has been filled in around the house. Under such conditions, success can be achieved only by digging a larger than necessary hole for the trees, then using a good soil for planting.

In using evergreens in plantings, keep in mind that trees are living things. They do have a life span which may, under certain conditions, be short, and they can be killed easily. Be prepared to make replacements.

Evergreens vary in shade tolerance. Pine and spruce should not be planted in areas of considerable shade. They prefer open sunlight. Redcedar and arborvitae can stand considerable shade.

PLANTING SMALL EVERGREENS

Small evergreens, either seedling or transplants, are usually planted bare root during the early spring, as soon as possible after the frost leaves the ground, but before new growth has begun.

The common practice, where large numbers are involved, is to use a tree planting machine. Small numbers are usually planted with a shovel.

In shovel planting, two methods are used; the "hole" method and the "slit" method.
CAUTION

EVERGREENS SHOULD BE PLANTED ONLY AS DEEP AS THEY GREW ORIGINALLY IN THE NURSERY. PLANTING TOO DEEP OR TOO SHALLOW CAN AND OFTEN DOES LEAD TO THE DEATH OF TREES.

NEVER MIX COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER WITH THE SOIL THAT IS PUT AROUND THE EVERGREEN ROOTS WHEN PLANTING. EVERGREEN ROOTS ARE SENSITIVE AND CAN BE INJURED BY CONTACT WITH COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER.

INSTEAD OF USING A COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER, PLANT NEW TREES IN A GOOD GRADE OF TOP SOIL CONTAINING PLENTY OF ORGANIC MATTER. AFTER THE TREE HAS EXHAUSTED THIS SUPPLY OF FOOD, COMMERCIAL FERTILIZERS CAN BE ADDED.

PLANTING LARGE EVERGREENS

When balled evergreens are purchased from a nursery, or nursery stock salesman, the trees you receive will have a firm ball of soil around the root system. This soil will be held in place with burlap or other similar material. In planting this tree you

The hole method is the commonest used, and is adapted for use on all soils. Dig a hole large enough to permit placing the tree roots in their natural position, without crowding or balling. It is very important that the root collar or dirt line be right at the surface of the ground when the hole is completely filled. Good soil should be worked around the roots, and firmed. Continue adding soil and firming it until the hole is filled.

In the slit method, usable on light sandy soils, a slit or narrow opening is made in the soil with a spade. The tree roots are inserted in this opening, making sure that the roots hang freely. Then withdraw the shovel and firm the soil with heel pressure.
place this ball of soil in the ground with the top of the ball even with or an inch or two below the level of the ground. To do this:

1. Dig a hole slightly larger than the ball of the soil that is around the tree roots.

2. Place the tree carefully in this hole. Keep the burlap on the ball of the soil.

3. Fill in around the base of the balled soil. Tramp this soil firmly in place. Repeat this operation until the crack space is full. A saucer-like depression around the tree makes watering easier.

4. Soak the soil around the newly planted tree to the full depth of planting. Water once a week for the next 6 to 8 weeks.

DIGGING LARGE EVERGREENS FOR TRANSPLANTING

Conditions often make it necessary to move large evergreens. Trees up to 6 or 7 feet tall can be moved easily and trees up to 15 feet tall can be moved by amateurs if a power scoop or other similar machinery is available. Trees over 15 feet should be left for the professional tree movers or used as a Christmas tree and for Christmas greens.

In digging out a tree for transplanting, follow these steps.

1. Dig a trench 12 to 24 inches deep around the tree — 12 inches for trees 12 to 18 inches high, deeper for larger trees. This trench should be immediately below the outer edge of the lower branches.
2. Wrap burlap sheeting around this ball of soil that is around the tree. Have the burlap tight. Fasten the loose end with nails in the way pins are used to hold paper or cloth together. (Burlap strips for this tying purpose can be made by cutting burlap sacks open on the long sides.)

3. Undercut the burlap wrapped ball of soil. Work a strip of burlap sheeting under the ball.

4. Lift out the balled tree using the ends of this second burlap strip as a sling. If the tree is to be planted nearby, it can be carried there in this manner. If it is to be transported, then pin this burlap securely with nails. Don't forget to pin the sides as well as the ends.

When handling balled trees, always handle it by the ball and not by the tree top.

Should you want to move larger trees, a tractor scoop can be used both to make the undercut as well as to carry the tree to the new location, but even under these conditions, burlap the sides of the ball of soil around the roots.