



After-care Program for New Transplants

Planting new trees and transplanting existing ones is an excellent way to provide immediate landscape enhancements. While not difficult to maintain, newly planted trees require a period of at least two years of proper maintenance in order to help establish a healthy plant. Generally, the larger the tree is when planted, the longer this establishment period will be. Even when professionally transplanted, trees may lose some of their root system during the digging process. Techniques such as root pruning and other advancements can help reduce the stress on the root system. During the establishment period, shoot growth and leaf size may be reduced and wilting and leaf browning may occur. These symptoms are often referred to as "transplant shock" and may be avoidable by performing a few basic aftercare observations and maintenance tasks. Without proper maintenance, a newly planted/transplanted tree may not be able to rapidly regenerate roots, and will fail to establish and can ultimately die. This usually can be attributed to one or more of the following causes:

Once established, young trees are capable of rapid growth. Young trees have a high ratio of leaf surface area to total biomass. With this high ratio, they generate a surplus of energy which is used to fuel rapid growth. Young trees also can tolerate change and stress because of high levels of stored energy.

Since the value and benefits of landscape plants increase as they grow, promoting rapid growth is generally a key objective when managing young plants. Plant health care programs are designed to maximize growth and to ensure a strong crown structure and root system to support the tree later in life. To obtain these objectives a program which includes pruning, fertilization and root system care is recommended

Proper pruning early in a tree's life prevents and corrects problems that cause trees to fail as they mature. The primary goal of pruning young trees is to ensure a strong structure for future growth. Because the leaves produce all the plant's energy for growth, excessive pruning must be avoided. Subsequently, pruning lightly but often is best for the health of plants. Generally, pruning every two years is optimal for young trees.

Young trees generally respond to fertilization. When rapid growth is a primary objective, routine applications of a high nitrogen, slow release fertilizer such as Bartlett BOOST are recommended. Soil pH should be maintained at the level preferred by the plant species. If deficiency symptoms occur, remedial treatments should be based on soil analysis.

Pest Problems: Many plant species are highly prone to pest problems when stressed by transplanting. Borers, bark beetles, scale, mites and canker and root diseases are common on stressed plants. New transplants also are less capable of tolerating defoliating insect and disease pests.

A key objective of PHC programs for newly planted trees is to encourage root regeneration. New plantings also require frequent inspections and intensive care to maintain them through the critical establishment period. In order to achieve these goals, a program of monitoring, soil treatments and pest management is required.

New plantings are very fragile and can decline and die rapidly due to environmental stress or pest infestations. Frequent inspections are essential to detect subtle changes in plant health and pest infestations. Homeowners should inspect new plantings several times each week during the growing season. A professional arborist should monitor plants on a bi-monthly basis