

## **PLANTING ADVANCED TREES**

The following information is intended as a guide to the successful planting of advanced trees. Should you require any further information please contact Ferngrove Trees & we will provide information specific to your needs.

The level of stress trees are subject to before & during planting affects the speed at which they establish & how well they establish. Minimal stress on the plant is the aim of successful planting.

All trees must be thoroughly watered prior to planting in order to minimise the chance of water stress occurring.

### **SOIL PREPARATION & DRAINAGE**

Soil preparation requirements are dependent on many factors. Species selection may indicate the need for a particular soil type. Specific preparation may be required if the soil has the incorrect pH or is lacking in certain nutrients. Preparation may include adding organic matter to the soil to improve aeration & assist with drainage as well as nutrient holding capacity.

If drainage on your site is problematic installation of drainage pipes prior to planting may be necessary. If the available topsoil is shallow the soil level will need to be built up to allow newly planted trees to establish. Do not dig down into clay subsoil when planting. This creates a well or sump which may collect water & lead to poor drainage around the root zone.

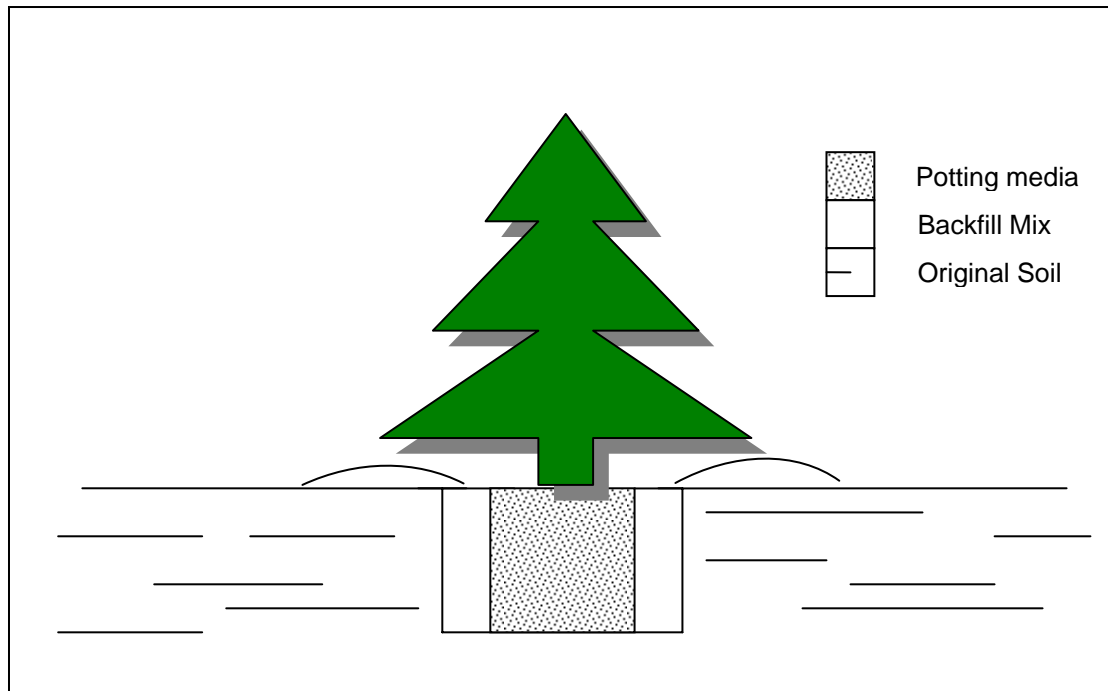
### **DIGGING THE HOLE**

When planting large trees we recommend that the hole is not much deeper than the depth of the root ball of the tree to be planted. However, the hole should be 2 to 3 times as wide as the root ball. Ensure that the base of the hole is firm otherwise the tree may 'sink' when watered in.

### **PLANTING TECHNIQUE**

Trees should be planted immediately following the removal of their container. The fine roots are sensitive to exposure to light and air. To remove the bag

from the root ball make 4 equally spaced cuts down the side of the bag. Pull the fabric away from the roots gently. Remove any spiralling or matted roots that may have formed on the sides or bottom of the root ball. Place the tree in the hole as shown.



**Figure 1.**

### **BACKFILLING HOLE**

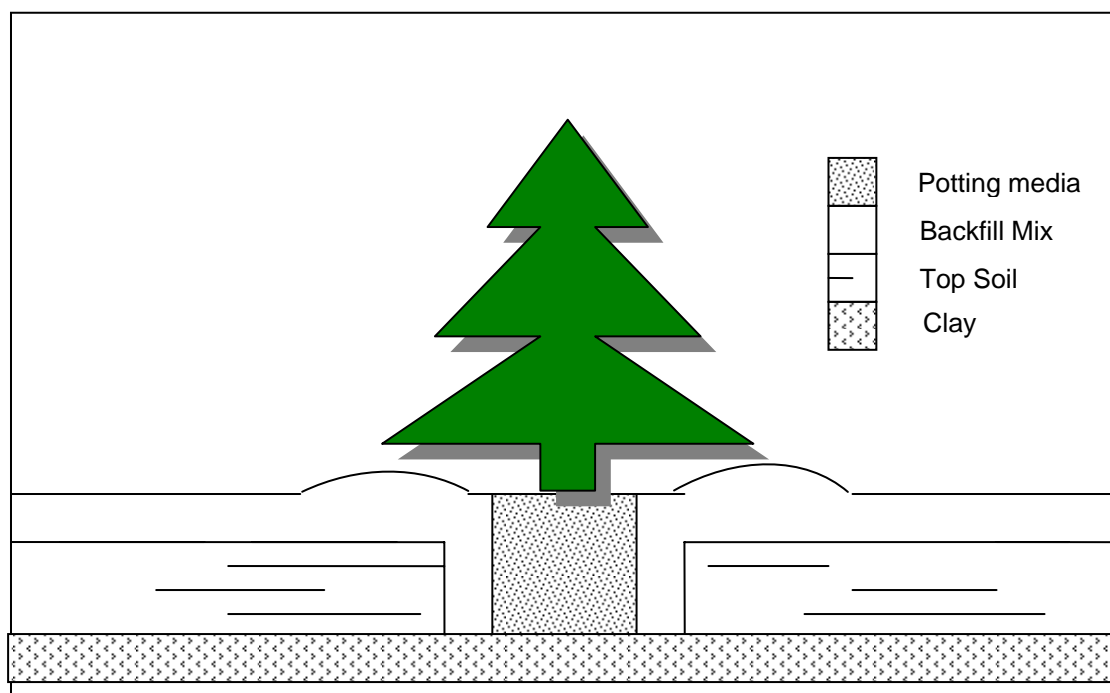
Ensure that the top of the root ball is level with or slightly above the existing ground level. Once tree is in place, backfill with improved soil dug from the hole and firm in to prevent air pockets. It is very important that the soil level around the trunk remain at the same level as in the bag/container. Placing new soil against the trunk can cause damage to your tree. The backfill soil can be improved by blending composted organic matter with the original soil prior to backfilling. A rule of thumb blend will have 20-30% compost blended into the original soil. Slow release fertilizer, such as pelletized chicken manure can also be incorporated into the mix.

Create a saucer or dish around the root ball to collect water and direct it to the root ball. This technique prevents water run off into the surrounding soil.

## SITES WITH CLAY SUBSOIL

It is important that you do not dig deeply into clay subsoil when digging the hole. If the topsoil is shallow, ie less than 400mm, it is better to build the soil levels up so new trees have enough soil volume to establish well.

Rather than import soil for this purpose, it is preferable to incorporate composted organic material through the soil to build up the existing topsoil profile. If soil must be imported it is beneficial to add composted organic matter to it also.



**Figure2.**

## STAKING

Staking is not always necessary and should only be done if the trunk requires support or if you are planting the tree in a windy location.

If staking is required, support stakes should be secured at the lowest position which will hold the tree erect ie at or below half of their height. Some trunk

movement is necessary for development of a strong well proportioned trunk. Trees should be able to sway even when staked. Ties should be a fabric like hession tape, and not rope which can damage the trunk of the tree. It is best if the tie is a little bit loose around the truck to allow for the increasing size of the trunk calliper as the tree grows. Ties and stakes should be removed as soon as possible and should never be left on for more than 12 months.

## **WATERING**

Following planting the single most important requirement of a newly planted tree is adequate water. Watering in must be concentrated on the existing root ball as this is the only means the tree has to access moisture. Moisture will not flow from the surrounding soils back to the root ball.

Gently fill the dish around the tree with water and let the water soak in slowly. Deep regular watering in this manner will be necessary during the first few months following planting.

Alternatively drippers may be placed directly on top of the root ball – this is the most simple and effective means of watering trees thoroughly.

Remember to recommence watering soon after it rains if trees have been recently planted. Whilst the surrounding soil may still be wet, once the rootball has dried out the plant will start to stress.

To start with we recommend frequent short waters for the maintenance of the tree, and as the trees become more established the waterings become less frequent but longer to allow for the increased size of the root system.

## **MULCHING**

Mulching trees following planting will help retain moisture around the root ball as well as reducing temperature fluctuations in the soil and weed competition.

Mulch should not come into contact with the trunk as it may cause rotting. Be careful not to apply mulch too thickly. A layer of mulch about 50 – 75mm deep is adequate. Water must still be able to penetrate through the mulch to the root ball.