



TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

Technical Tree Solutions:

Transplanting Trees

Trees that are either naturally established or previously planted in another location in the ground can be transplanted to a new location by following these steps over the course of the year.

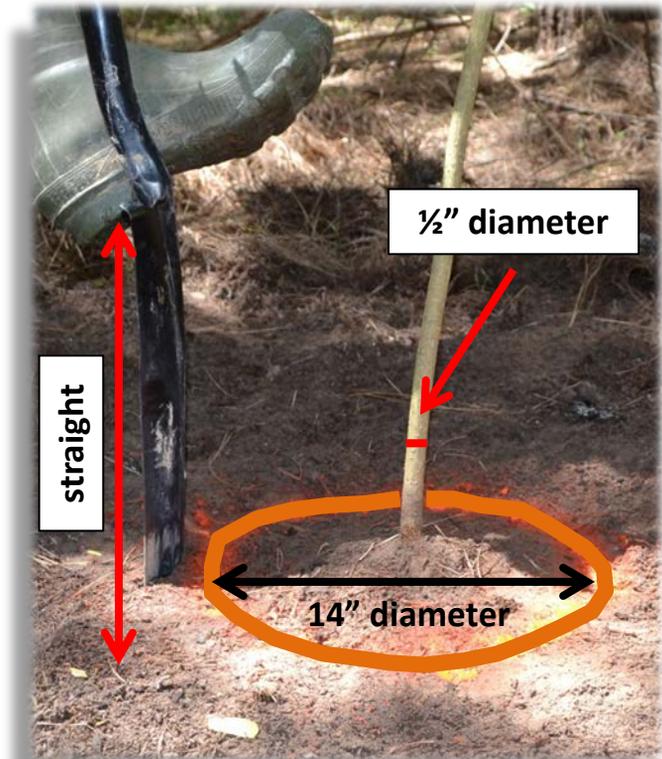
1. Mark Tree: If transplanting a tree from a forest, it is a good idea to mark the tree with flagging during the summer months while the leaves are still attached. It can be difficult to identify the tree once the leaves fall off and there are many similar trees nearby.

2. Reduce Root Ball: After leaf fall (October-November), the tree's root ball should be reduced in size to ease transplanting. Reducing the root ball by cutting the roots back (see table below) will encourage new root growth within the remaining root ball and reduce transplant shock.

Draw a circle the size of the desired root ball on the ground around the tree trunk. Working with a sharpshooter shovel sever the roots straight down along the edge of the drawn circle, down to the appropriate depth. Severing the roots at an angle may damage the remaining root ball. Use pruning loppers to cut through large roots.

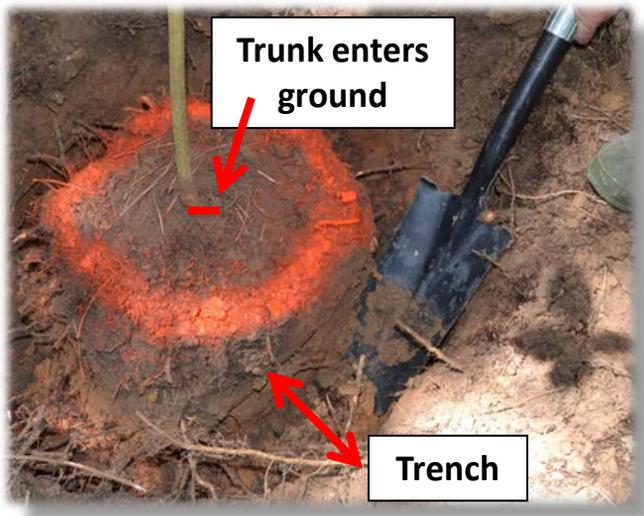
Continue to water the tree as needed until it is transplanted.

3. Dig Tree: In late winter (February-March) before bud break, on the day you plan to transplant the tree, flag the north facing side of the tree, and the location on the tree trunk where it enters the ground. Re-draw the circle on the ground around the tree trunk where the roots were severed back in the fall.

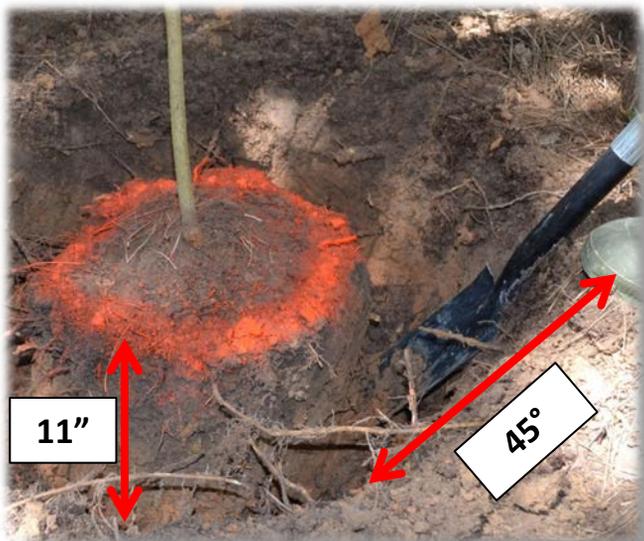


Tree Diameter (Inches)	Root Ball Diameter (Inches)	Depth (Inches)
1/2	14	11
3/4	16	12
1	18	14
1 1/2	22	15
1 3/4	24	16
2	28	19

Dig a trench around the outside edge of the marked circle to give yourself some room to lift the root ball with the shovel.



Place the shovel in the trench down to the depth of the desired root ball. At the bottom of that depth angle the shovel 45° and insert it under the root ball, lifting the root ball a little at a time all the way around the circle. Roots that go below the desired root ball will need to be cut with loppers. Lift the tree and attached root ball out of the ground.



4. Transporting the Tree: Once the root ball has been lifted, you will need to transport it to its new location either with the soil attached or bareroot. Trees over 1" in diameter and evergreen trees need to be transported and replanted with the soil attached.

- **Soil Attached** - To keep the soil attached to the root system, either wrap the root ball in burlap or place it in a pot or 5-gallon bucket to transport it to the new hole.



- **Bareroot** – To transport it bareroot, remove the soil from the root ball by washing it away with water. It is not necessary to remove all of the soil, leaving some soil intact will help prevent moisture loss. Keep the roots moist during transport by placing the tree in a plastic bag or a bucket of water until re-planted. Allowing the roots to dry out will result in tree death. The tree must be replanted in its new hole the same day it is dug from the soil.



- 5. Dig New Hole:** Dig the new hole in the new location for the tree. Follow the guidelines for planting a tree on the info sheet, [How do I Care for my Trees? How to properly plant my tree.](#) Place the tree in the hole with the flagged north facing side to the north, and the marked trunk at the same depth in the ground.