



## HOW TO PLANT YOUR BARE ROOTED OR POTTED FRUIT TREE

**\* IMPORTANT! Do not let the roots of your bare-rooted tree dry out at ANY time. Wet them thoroughly and wrap them in a plastic bag to take them home. Plant them as soon as possible, and meanwhile KEEP THE ROOTS DAMP. Also make sure you DO NOT BUMP THE GRAFT when transporting your tree. The new graft union is fragile and if it is dislodged it will not join. Leave grafting tape on tree until February.**

\* Before planting, it is preferable to soak tree roots, whether potted or bare-rooted, in a bucket of water or weak seaweed solution for half an hour.

\* Measure the depth and width of the soil in your tree's container. Dig a hole to that depth and two to three times wider. Pile the excavated soil to the side to be used later. Loosen the soil around the sides of the hole to help roots penetrate into the native soil. Don't loosen the soil at the bottom of the hole because the disturbed soil may settle and leave the tree planted too deeply. Add some organic matter, such as compost and aged manure. If you plant in hot weather, pour water into the hole before planting.

\* Build up a small pile of soil in the bottom of the hole,

\* Slip the tree out of its pot or remove the planter bag. Using sharp, sterile secateurs, prune off only those roots that tightly encircle the trunk or are broken. With your hand, loosen and gently spread roots that encircle the root ball.

\* Set your tree in the hole, spreading the roots evenly over the small pile of soil without bending or breaking them. Lay a shovel handle across hole to check the planting depth. The top of the root ball should just touch the shovel handle. Add or remove soil until the top of the root ball is at the appropriate level.

\* Gently 'tremble' the tree as you put the soil back into the hole. This ensures that the soil gets into the spaces between the roots.

\* Make sure the tree is not planted too deeply. Especially make sure that no soil covers the graft union.

\* Using seaweed solution, water the tree in thoroughly. Keep the soil moist for the next few months while your tree is settling in. Regular deep watering is essential until the tree's root system is established into the surrounding soil.

\* Label your tree so that you know which variety it is. This is important especially when obtaining pollinators.

\* If the trunk is weak, or the tree is prone to falling over, or if it's in a position open to strong winds, stake it with strong tomato stakes. Put the stakes in the ground away from the tree, **not** close to it. The tree needs to be free to move in the breeze. The movement strengthens the roots so that the tree will not become dependent on the supports.

\* Use at least two stakes (three is best) and tie it fairly loosely with flexible, pliable tree-clips or soft ties. As the tree gets bigger and stronger, remove them. Do not use hard ties such as wire, as these may ringbark the tree as its girth expands, and eventually kill it..

\* Apply a thick layer of mulch around the tree. Soil or mulch piled against a trunk can cause rot, so create a doughnut-shaped hole to ensure that the mulch stays a few centimetres away from the trunk.