

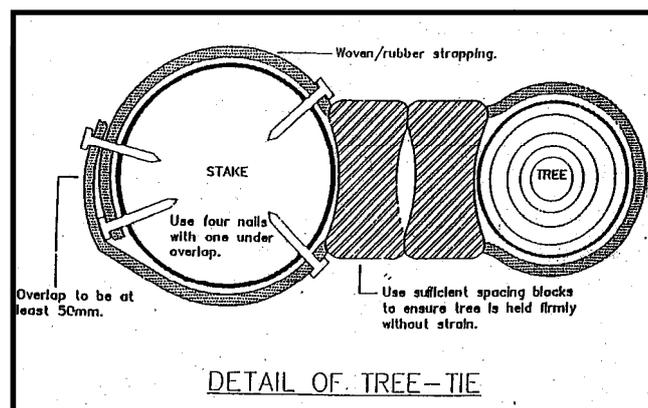
**Brighton & Hove City Council
Arboricultural Information Note No. 1**



Advice on Tree Planting

- 1 Consider what you wish the tree to provide – shade, blossom, berries for winter bird feed, colour or leaf shape may aid your final selection.
- 2 Consider the ultimate height and spread of your selection and assess any future problems against the location chosen.
- 3 Check that the tree is compatible with local soil conditions.
- 4 Purchase your tree from a reputable supplier at a size that you can safely lift and plant. Also purchase one or two tree stakes, depending on the size of your tree, together with protective pads to prevent the tree rubbing against the stake, and plastic or rubberised strapping to use as ties. You will also require a few galvanised nails and a hammer.
- 5 Purchase your tree in good time to allow planting from November to February. Delay any planting if the ground is waterlogged or frozen.
- 6 If your selected tree is not root-balled, containerised or potted, ensure that the bare roots are kept from drying out by ‘heeling in’ until you are ready to plant - simply dig a hole where the roots can be plunged into the ground and back-filled with the soil from the excavation to prevent drying winds or frost damaging the delicate root system. Containerised trees should be planted with the hessian root wrap left in place and with only the wires at the base of the stem loosened. Containerised and potted trees will need to be removed from their pots prior to planting.
- 7 When ready to plant your tree, excavate a planting pit large enough for the root system to fit comfortably with a minimum of 200mm clear space between the roots and the sides of the planting pit.
- 8 The tree should be planted to the same depth as it was originally grown at the supplying nursery. On bare rooted trees the soil line will normally be visible. With root-balled, potted or containerised trees, these should be planted so that the soil around the root system is level with the surrounding ground. These factors will determine the depth of the planting pit.
- 9 Take a little time during the preparation of the planting pit to separate the topsoil from the sub-soil and any chalk. The latter should be disposed of entirely, while the sub-soil can be used to top up the pit following planting, if required. However, it is quality topsoil that should be placed around the tree’s roots. Improve the backfill material by adding well-rotted leaf mould or a bag of peat-free compost. If manure is available, this should be over one year old before being used, to prevent ‘burning’ the root system.

- 10 Your tree is now ready to be planted. Bring it to the side of the pit and with it on its side, remove all labels, tags and tying-in material. With secateurs, cut cleanly any broken branches back to a side lateral branch and remove any crossing branches, dead wood and those that may be rubbing against one another. With bare rooted trees also inspect the root system and prune back to healthy tissue any broken or damaged roots.
- 11 Place the tree in the pit and position the best side of the canopy to meet with your required viewing point and note the position. Also note the position for the stake(s) against the root system. If necessary, remove the tree to make any adjustments to the size of the tree pit.
- 12 With a suitable tool, drive in the stake(s) to a depth of 600mm or until a firm fixing is secured. Place the tree back into the pit to display the best side, ensuring that the tree is at the depth originally planted at in the supplying nursery. Secure the tree to the stake(s) using the strapping. Nail the first length to the stake with galvanised nails and insert an end through the protective pad. Take the loose ends around the tree and again slip the end through the protective pad, pull tight and secure the free end back to the stake and secure with nails. Ensure that no part of the tree's trunk is in contact with the stake(s) (see diagram). For one stake, two ties will normally be required – one at approximately one quarter of the tree's height measured from ground level, and a second at approximately 75mm below the lowest branch. Cut off the top of the stake to leave 25mm above the topmost tie. With two stakes, simply repeat the process.



- 13 Now backfill with the topsoil and soil additives, carefully avoiding striking the stem or roots and ensure that the soil is spread evenly through the root system. To avoid the formation of air pockets, after each and every 150mm of backfill, firm the soil around the roots using the heel of a boot, repeating until the pit is filled level with the surrounding ground.
- 14 Water the tree to ensure that the soil is evenly distributed and fills any undesirable air pockets and to fully hydrate the soil.
- 15 Ideally, leave a 1m diameter circle of clear soil around the tree, and hoe on a regular basis. This prevents weed competition, protecting the tree and your investment and also prevents the temptation of putting a strimmer anywhere near the tree. Tree bark mulch can also be placed over the soil to a depth of 75mm to suppress weeds and retain moisture.
- 16 Irrigate the tree on a regular basis with as much water as possible and inspect the stability of the stakes and ties every two months, loosening the ties as the tree increases in girth. After two to three growing seasons the stakes can be removed if the root system shows no sign of movement.