



Tree Replacement Tips for Fall

By Dr. Moon

In Texas, the impact of summer droughts and winter storms has led to the loss of many trees. For those of you considering tree replacement, it's crucial to note that October and November are the prime times for planting new trees. This fall planting window allows the tree to establish its roots in the surrounding soil during the winter, significantly increasing its chances of survival in the following summer's heat.

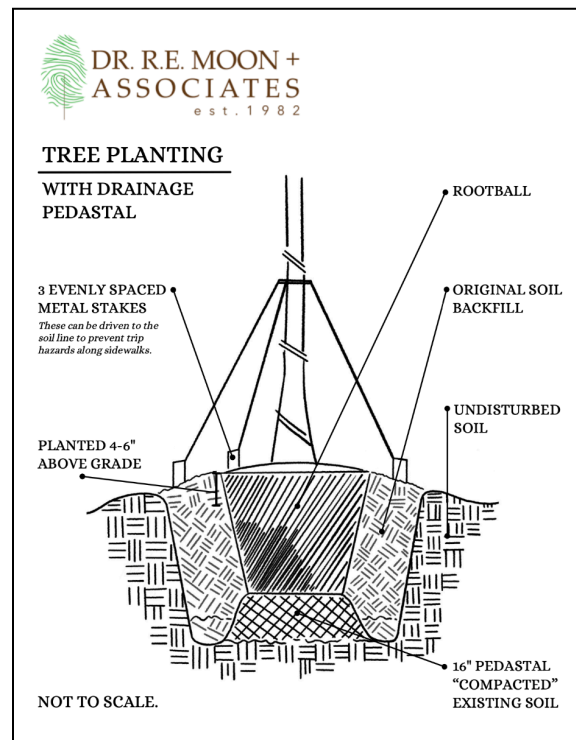
STEP ONE in this process is to select a good-quality tree. We recommend locating a local nursery with a robust inventory of 2 ½ - 3 ½ inch trunk diameter trees. The diameter (width of the trunk) should be measured at 6 inches above ground level. These trees should be 12' – 16' tall and 4' – 6' wide (canopy). Trees should be well-branched, meaning that the branches should be evenly spaced. Avoid trees with a double leader (two equal branches in the middle of the tree forming a “Y”). The first branches should start at a height of 5' – 7' up from ground level. Trees that usually fit these guidelines are 65-gallon to 100-gallon container trees that you should inspect to ensure they are not root-bound. B&B trees (balled and with burlap wrap) should have a root ball width of 28 to 38 inches and a depth of 24 to 30 inches.



Container Tree

B&B Tree

STEP TWO involves the correct planting of the tree. For most homeowners, we highly recommend enlisting the expertise of professionals for this task. These tree installers plant trees on a daily basis and have the necessary equipment to handle and install them correctly. Whether you install the tree yourself or hire a professional, it's crucial to ensure the tree is planted 2" to 4" higher than the existing soil line, allowing for settling to the soil level. Additionally, the tree should be staked in 3 directions to prevent it from being blown over by strong winds and storms until it is fully established, typically taking about a year.



Correct Tree Planting

STEP THREE is critical for your new tree. Water the tree thoroughly after planting, then only once or twice a week. Do not overwater these trees. The tree company that plants your tree can provide watering instructions for the soil in your yard.

STEP FOUR is the proper fertilization of your tree. It's important to fertilize the tree after planting and at least three times yearly for the first three years. After three years, continue to fertilize your trees once or twice yearly. This commitment to proper fertilization is crucial for the health and growth of your tree. Use a fertilizer with a high first number (nitrogen) on the fertilizer bag and read to ensure it is a **slow-release** fertilizer. Apply $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter. Spread the fertilizer evenly from the tree trunk to 2 feet

past the tree drip line, then water the fertilizer thoroughly. A good fertilizer is *Bio-Advanced Tree and Shrub*. This product also has a systemic insecticide that protects the young tree from borers. Follow all label directions when applying.

Trees can be mulched after planting, but do not get carried away with too much mulch. Mulch should be pulled back from the trunk, and we recommend a mulch depth of no more than 2 inches. Tree planting can be challenging, but the above-detailed information can serve as a valuable guide. Research and use any reputable tree supplier and installer of your choice.