

Hazelnut Planting Guide

You should plant your trees as soon as possible. If you can't plant them right away, keep the soil in the pot moist until you can. If you can keep them in a spot out of extended direct, hot sun it reduces the risk of drying and water stress. In winter, protect the roots from freezing and thawing, but keep them in a cool place where they will remain dormant.

Dig a hole in a well-drained area twice as wide and deep as the rootball, and loosen the soil in the bottom of the hole. Mix any soil amendments into the backfill soil – while none may be necessary in fertile agricultural soils, a small amount of a slowly available source of phosphorus like bone meal or rock phosphate, and no more than one part **good quality** compost to two parts of the soil that came out of the hole can help provide long-term fertility, while improving aeration and moisture holding capacity to promote root establishment. When backfilling your hole, aim for the soil to be at the same level as it was in the pot when complete. The goal is to make certain no roots are exposed after planting without burying the trunk deeper. You will need to take settling of the soil when watered into consideration, though a small depression around the tree after planting is often a good thing, especially in drier, well-drained and/or coarse-textured soils, because it will help to channel rainwater to the roots and benefit establishment.

Carefully remove the plant from the pot by turning it upside down, squeezing the pot gently, tapping or pushing on the bottom and then shaking to dislodge the rootball. If there are any larger roots heading back up the sides of the pots, these should be loosened gently so they will be directed down into your planting hole. Very long or damaged roots can be pruned back.

Place the root ball in the hole and backfill, using your hands to gently firm the soil as you go so there are no airspaces around the roots. Water in thoroughly to settle the soil; no further fertilizer application should be necessary at planting so long as your soil is relatively fertile, but if your soil lacks fertility or organic matter, good quality finished compost is safe to apply as a soil amendment any time of year and has other benefits (moisture retention, beneficial microorganisms). More concentrated synthetic fertilizers should be used with care and usually earlier in the growing season; too much fertility, especially nitrogen, can promote soft growth that is more susceptible to diseases, pests and winter kill.

If you want to continue with a single-trunk standard tree, prune regularly to remove suckers and any branches up to the height at which you want your main scaffold branches to start but no more than 2/3 of the height of your tree – cut close to the main stem but take care not to cut into the branch collar (raised area where branch leaves stem). If it's later in the growing season when you plant, you may want to wait until the tree is dormant and prune in mid to late winter after the tree is dormant. In any case, take care not to remove too much at once from these young container-grown trees as leaves are the generators of energy for growth and establishment. It is a common practice to prune back the main stem of taller potted trees to encourage good scaffold branching.

Stake each tree but don't bind too tightly (or loosely!) to the stake as this can damage the tree. It is a good idea to apply a dilute latex paint to the main stem to help reduce the risk of sunscald to the trunk. Tree protection sleeves can be used to help prevent damage from animals (eg: beaver) but also make it harder to prune suckers. Control weeds around the tree to reduce competition; mulching from the trunk out at least 2-3 ft or installing heavy landscape fabric are good strategies that help to reduce work. A downside of mulches is they may attract small rodents in winter. There are always pros and cons to weigh and best choices for maintenance take situation-specific conditions into account.

Irrigate consistently during periods of dry soil conditions as necessary, at least until well established and through the first full growing season. Ongoing irrigation of more mature trees is likely important to good growth and yields especially in hot, dry years, but ideal irrigation requirements have not been well-established and are still being investigated and identified.

While these trees have genetic resistance to our most serious disease issue, Eastern Filbert Blight, they are not immune. It is possible for infection to occur, particularly in areas of high disease pressure. Infection is most likely when trees are young, and occurs on new, soft growth in spring. It's recommended to use fungicide sprays for at least the first couple of growing seasons, with several sprays from bud-break for several weeks after; cultivars with lower resistance may require sprays longer-term and ongoing. See <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/plant-health/insects-and-plant-diseases/nuts> for more info about disease identification and prevention.