

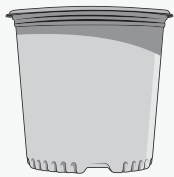
BAREROOT TREES

ROOT PRUNING AND POTTING

Root pruning is essential when caring for bareroot trees, especially for container planting. Just as top pruning promotes branching, root pruning encourages new root growth. Always use clean, sharp tools.

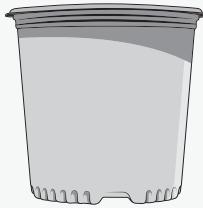
CHOOSING THE RIGHT POT SIZE: Match the liner to the pot. If the liner is too large, you'll need to remove excess roots, which can harm the plant. A liner that's too small wastes potting soil and makes the plant harder to manage, while also impacting proportion. Here's a helpful chart:

**Tree liner sizes based on Minnesota growing season. Can use one size smaller depending on your region.*



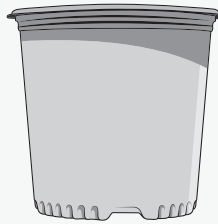
#5 POT

- 5' & Smaller Trees
- 7/8" & Smaller Fruit Trees



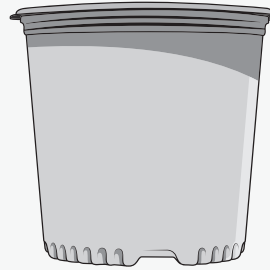
#7 - #10 POT

- 4' - 6' Trees
- 11/16" - 7/8" Fruit Trees



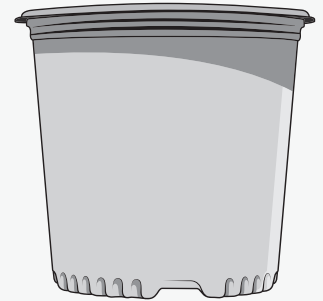
#10 POT

- 6' - 1" Trees



#15 POT

- 1 1/4" - 1 1/2" Trees

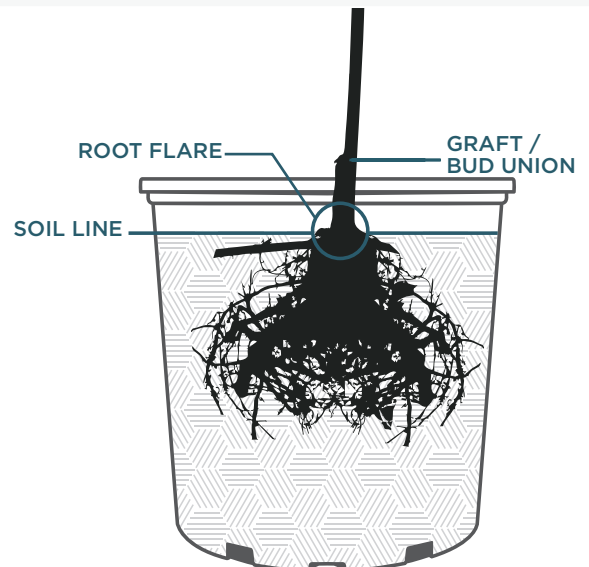


#20 - #25 POT

- 1 1/2" & Larger Trees

FITTING THE LINER TO THE POT: Once you have the correct liner size, root pruning becomes simpler. Focus on removing damaged roots, ensuring the plant is centered, and achieving the correct planting depth. The root flare should be slightly above the soil surface after the potting mix settles.

ROOT TYPES AND PRUNING NEEDS: Plants with coarse roots—such as hawthorn, dogwood, elm, mountain ash, oaks, pears, and tulip tree—should be pruned minimally. In contrast, species with fibrous roots, like maple and crabapple, can handle heavier pruning.



ROOT CARE BEFORE POTTING: Maintaining hydration of the root system after pruning and prior to potting is extremely important. There are many methods of keeping roots at a consistently humid but cool temperature to avoid desiccation. At a minimum, ensure the root surface remains moist. For species that benefit from “sweating” (oak, elm, linden, honey locust, redbud, serviceberry, hornbeam, birch, tulip tree, and others), it’s helpful to soak the roots in water for 2-4 days to a couple of weeks, depending on the species. Swollen buds indicate planting readiness. Always ensure the roots stay moist and do not dry out before potting.

POTTING TIMING: Avoid potting too early, as cold weather can damage buds, even in moist soil. The best time for potting varies by region, but it should occur after the risk of frost has passed and before temperatures and humidity rise too high. Determine the last day of frost and aim for nighttime temperatures above freezing and moderate daytime conditions. This helps to protect the vulnerable buds as they begin to root in. The benefit of bareroot is the ability to keep it stored in case planting dates change due to unfavorable weather.

POST-POTTING CARE: After potting, it takes time for roots to establish and begin absorbing water from the soil. The more roots removed, the longer this process will take. Staking may be needed to stabilize the tree. Signs that rooting has begun include swelling buds, leaf emergence, or roots visible at the bottom weep holes. To check rooting progress, gently move the tree to assess its stability.

If the soil crumbles away from the roots, wait longer before confirming root establishment. Initially, the tree will take time to draw water from the soil, so after watering it in, reduce watering until root growth begins. This is especially true for buckeye, horse chestnut, redbud, ironwood, and lilacs. Keep the soil evenly moist but avoid over watering, and generally avoid applying top-dressed herbicide at planting.

It’s important to consider pH and EC soil testing to monitor the build up of salts in the media. EC level correlates with nutrients availability for the plant. So, regular monitoring and observing trends will ensure the plant is meeting the necessary fertilizer requirements.