



# PROPER TREE STAKING

The ideal time to plant a tree is in early spring (late February to early April)

## Why stake trees?

In an ideal world no trees would ever require staking. Most of the trees sold in Arizona, however, are grown in containers. While growing in containers, trees do not develop roots or trunks that are strong enough to support the trees once they are installed in our landscapes.

## Installation and staking

1. Excavate a hole that is of proper size, ensuring that it is not too deep for the tree.
2. Remove the container that surrounds the root ball. If the root structure appears to be healthy, go ahead and place the tree into the hole. If, however, the roots appear to be growing in a round, or rectangular, pattern that is dictated by the shape of the container, return the tree to the nursery and obtain a replacement.
3. Fill the hole surrounding the tree with native soil, making sure to water sufficiently to eliminate air pockets around the root zone.
4. Remove any stakes that were in the planting container, especially those to which the trunk was tightly tied.
5. Grasp the trunk of the newly planted tree and firmly move it, simulating the strength of a strong wind. If the trunk seems to be weak, or if the roots do not appear to be capable of supporting the trunk and canopy, additional staking is warranted.
6. Stake newly planted tree with 2" diameter by 8' or 10' length (depending upon the height of the tree) pressure-treated stakes. These should be driven into the ground outside of the planting hole and root ball.



Although it is possible to utilize many types of materials as tree stakes, best are the 2" diameter pressure treated wood stakes. These are available at most nurseries, as well as at home improvement stores.

7. Attach tie wires to the stakes and a large diameter wire loop that surrounds the tree trunk. The loop around the trunk should be at least one foot in diameter and the tree trunk should be able to move freely. A tree should NEVER be tied so tightly that it cannot move freely. It may be necessary to tie the trunk at two, or even three, heights.

## Removal

Most stakes can be removed after approximately one year, once the tree has established a strong trunk and adequate roots and is stable. It's important to remove the stakes and wires promptly. If left on too long, they will girdle — or cut in — to the tree trunk. This will eventually weaken the tree and can cause it to die.



Stakes and wires left on a tree too long will girdle the trunk.

