



# Charlotte Public Tree Fund

## Proper Tree Planting with Support Stake, Tree Tube, and Weed Mat

### 1. Hole Digging and Preparation

a. Dig a hole 12 to 18 inches across and several inches deeper than your tree's roots so the roots can grow in all directions. To determine proper hole depth locate the spot on the tree trunk where the roots begin or the seedling begins to widen or flare outward. This is the root flare. Above this spot is trunk and below it is root. The goal is to plant your tree just deep enough so the trunk is above ground and the roots just below the surface with a few inches of space between the bottom of your hole and the deepest roots. TIP: lay a shovel handle or stake across your hole and hold the tree so the root flare is right at the top of the hole. If you have space below your roots the hole is deep enough.

b. Make sure to gouge the sides of your hole with your shovel so the sidewalls of the hole are not smooth. Break up the soil you removed from the hole into small pieces and put the soil around the tree roots, filling the hole completely. DO NOT compact the soil back into the hole just press it gently around the roots, leaving no voids.

### 2. Support Stake Installation

a. Choose location for tree tube support stake – We recommend the north side of the seedling to avoid the stake blocking sunlight. On exposed, windy sites place the stake to the windward side for more stability.

b. Position the stake 1-1 1/2 inches from the seedling. Then, using a stake driver, drive support stake straight into the soil (about 14-16 inches depending upon the tube height), just deep enough to keep the top of the stake about 1-2 inches above the top cable tie of the tree tube (hint – use standing tree tube as a guide to assure proper stake depth).

### 3. Tree Tube Installation

a. Note that there are three sets of large holes in each tree tube used to secure the tube to the support stake with twist lock ties. The top of the tube is the end with the two sets of tie holes that are the closest together. After locating the top, carefully guide the tube gently over the seedling and set the tube bottom firmly into the soil next to the stake. DO NOT install the tree tube over the stake. It is safer for the tree seedling if one person holds the seedling's branches together while another person guides the tube over the tree to avoid breaking branches.

b. Next, insert the twist lock ties through the access holes and wrap the twist ties around the stake, secure and twist tightly. Check to make sure you have not wrapped the tie around the tree as this will kill the tree.

#### **4. Weed Mat Installation**

a. Each weed mat is secured to the ground with 5 (or 6) staples (depending on the type of weed mat) – one in each corner, one in the center, and possibly another one along the side. After the tube is in place, slide the weed mat over or around the tube until it is flat on the ground. Pull the corners away from the tree and secure each corner to the ground with a staple, getting the mat as flat and smooth as possible. Finally, fold the center flap of the mat under the tree tube and secure it with the fifth staple.

#### **5. Tree Tube Sticker**

After you have planted each tree please ask a planting supervisor to inspect the tree. If the tree, tree tube, and weed mat were install correctly, then the supervisor will place a sticker on the tree tube. A sticker will indicate that the tree is properly planted. It will also enable us to more easily survey the planting site and determine when all of our 1,750 trees are planted.