



## FRIENDS OF LIVE OAKS

### HOW TO PLANT A LIVE OAK TREE SAPLING

#### **PLAN**

The first step is to choose the right location for your tree. Live oak trees need plenty of space to grow, so make sure you select a spot that is at least 20 feet away from any paved surface, canopy, other trees or structures. Avoid overhead wires and call Miss Utility at 811 to mark and avoid all buried public utilities. Don't plant in the City's right of way. The tree will grow best with partial to full sunlight, so avoid shady areas. Once you've selected the perfect spot, it's time to start digging!

#### **DIG**

Use a shovel to dig a hole that is 2-3 times the width of the tree's container or root ball and just deep enough for the root flare of the tree to be 1"- 2" higher than the surrounding grade to prevent diseases caused by too much moisture. Live oak trees need oxygen around the roots, so you don't need to worry about making the hole too deep. Next, backfill the hole with soil until the tree will be level with the surrounding ground once planted.

#### **PLANT**

Now it's time to plant your tree! Gently remove the tree from its container, clip off any girdling roots, loosen the soil around the plant and place it in the hole. Make sure that the roots are spread out.

#### **WATER**

Water the tree deeply immediately after planting. Live oak trees are very drought-tolerant, but they need extra water when they are first getting established - especially if little or no rainfall occurs. Later, water the tree once a week for the first few months, then you can reduce watering to once every 2 weeks if little or no rainfall occurs. In summer once a week watering is suggested; in winter every 2 weeks.

#### **FERTILIZE**

Fertilizing your live oak tree is important to ensure its health and growth. You may place a level tablespoon of time release fertilizer high in nitrogen in the tree hole when planting, or around the tree. You may use a tree fertilizer that is high in nitrogen and apply it around the base of the tree according to the manufacturer's instructions three times a year - in early spring, late spring, and mid-summer.

#### **MULCH**

Mulching is another important step in caring for your live oak tree. Hardwood mulch helps conserve soil moisture and creates favorable conditions for root growth. Apply a layer of mulch around the tree, making sure to keep it away from the trunk. A general rule of thumb is to use 2 to 4 inches of mulch, placing it in a donut shape around the tree - not a mound or cone shape.

#### **WHAT KIND OF MAINTENANCE DOES A LIVE OAK NEED?**

Live oak trees are very low-maintenance and do not require a lot of care once they are established. However, there are a few things you should do on a regular basis to keep your tree healthy. \*First, check the tree regularly for dead branches or leaves. Remove any dead material from the tree to keep it looking its best. Pruning at planting should be limited to removal of dead, diseased or broken limbs. Begin corrective pruning only after 1-2 years. \*Second, keep an eye out for pests or diseases. Live oak trees are relatively resistant to pests and disease, but it is still a good idea to check for problems periodically. If you see any signs of trouble, contact a certified arborist for assistance. \*Third, fertilize, water and mulch as described above.